

An Agenda of Caution:

The Influence of Productivization on the Integration of East European Jews

in North America During the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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A Thesis

In the Department of Religion

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Religion)

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

October 2012

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
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Abstract

An Agenda of Caution: The Influence of Productivization on the Integration of East European Jews in North America During the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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This dissertation begins with the premise that there was a growing sense of anxiety throughout the North American Jewish community over the increasing number of Jewish immigrants flowing in from Eastern Europe after 1880. This concern emanated from fears that these Eastern European Jews (1) will be unable to adjust to the North American way of life; (2) that the non-Jewish North American population will misunderstand the lifestyle and practices of these Jews, leading to a negative perception of all Jews; and (3) that the increasing numbers of East European Jews could result in an escalation of incidents of anti-Semitism. As a consequence of these concerns, this dissertation proposes that certain Jewish philanthropic and community groups adopted and promoted a series of responses influenced by a model of “productivization”. Productivization was a strategy of increasing the “productivity” of a group (in this case East European Jews) so as to improve how they were seen by non-Jews and Jews alike. This strategy influenced how these immigrants were relocated and depicted in public. The goal was to present this group in a better light, while discouraging any form of anti-Jewish activity that could arise from one or more of these concerns.

Acknowledgements

My sincere appreciation to the following people for their support, encouragement, and guidance throughout the preparation of this thesis.

(In no specific order)

My wife Linda, Lisa and Joshua

Louis Gontovnick & Evelyn Sculnik

Robert Sapienza

Janice Rosen (CJC Archives)

Helene Vallee (CJC Archives)

Centre for Jewish Studies (New York)

American Jewish Historical Society (New York)

Jewish Public Library (Montreal)

Concordia University Library

Concordia University Library – Inter-Library Loans Office

Dr. Ira Robinson (Concordia University)

Dr. Alvin R. Mahrer (University of Ottawa)

Dr. Norman Ravvin (Concordia University)

Dr. Michael Oppenheim (Concordia University)

Dr. Leslie Orr (Concordia University)

Dr. Susan Landau-Chark

Stanley Asher

***Howard A. Gontovnick
October/2012.***

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my “supervisor” and teacher, Dr. Ira Robinson. Throughout my years at Concordia University, Professor Robinson has been a regular pillar of inspiration and source of guidance.

As I move forward, I wish to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to Professor Robinson for his continuous support in the past and throughout the thesis process. A few words do not convey my heartfelt appreciation for his confidence in my abilities and for all that he has taught me. Whether on the specifics of Jewish law or Canadian Jewish history, his patience and unique style of teaching mixed with the occasional bit of humour, is the right combination that has inspired students like myself to reach for higher goals and possibilities.

Mit groys derekh-erets,

Howard Gontovnick

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Introduction

In 1881, following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the emigration of Jews out of Eastern Europe became “a turning point in modern Jewish history.”¹ Shortly after this event, the Russian Government passed a series of decrees that imposed a number of restrictive conditions on the Jewish population. One such condition was “a clause forbidding new settlements by Jews in a rural village, which was often interpreted broadly and used to expel families from areas they inhabited for generations.”² Not long after, a broad range of events including a series of brutal group attacks on Jews only intensified the situation across Eastern Europe. Known to history as pogroms, one such incident that occurred in Southern Russia inflicted “mass destruction, rape, and assault, on Jewish centres both small and large...”³ With these escalating troubles and the fear of being attacked on the rise, these were conditions that increased the number of Jews leaving the region. Some scholars have referred to these social conditions as the source that contributed to an “open rampant manifestation of Judaeophobia at every level of Russian society.”⁴ In other words, it was a negative perception that gradually spread across the region. For example in Austro-Hungary where Jews lived “a precarious existence on the basis of special ‘tolerance’ licenses...”, conditions worsened, resulting in more

¹ Rockaway, Robert A. *Words of the Uprooted*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 4.

² Dekel-Chen, Jonathan, Gaunt, David, Natan, Meir M. and Bartal, Israel. *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking The Pogrom in East European History*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2011. Page 118.

³ Frankel, Jonathan. *The Crisis of 1881-82: As a turning point in modern Jewish history*. Berger, David. *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its impact*. Atlantic Research and Publication, N.Y., 1983. Page 9.

⁴ Rockaway, Robert A. *Words of the Uprooted*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 4.

Jews leaving the region fearful for their life.⁵

After 1890, the number of Jewish refugees arriving from Eastern Europe in North America slowly began to increase. In response to this increased immigration, Derek Penslar wrote that “international Jewish social policy attempted to create a blueprint for a new type of Jew, both in the Diaspora and in Palestine.”⁶ Since Jews from Eastern Europe had been seen as troublesome, organizations involved in the settlement of immigrants from the regions had to take this perception into consideration. For example, the Hebrew Immigrant and Aid Society in New York City, went so far to emphasize the need to improve the training and occupational options for the new immigrants. Listed among its important concerns were: the numbers of refugees arriving daily, their occupational aptitude, and their language abilities. According to Jack Wertheimer, these preconceived perceptions were based on assumptions about these East Europeans and “coloured by stereotypical perceptions of Eastern Jews.”⁷

Considered as amplifications of basic anxieties, historian Jack Glazier wrote that “immigration became something of a lightning rod for many of the distressing and anxious feelings of those charged-filled years.”⁸ The United States was a destination that many East Europeans believed was a place of new opportunities; a land of freedom. However, in reality “America was not so

⁵ Baron, Salo W. “The Jewish Question in the Nineteenth Century”. *The Journal of Modern History*, Volume 10:1, 1938. Page 54.

⁶ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 240.

⁷ Wertheimer, Jack. *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1987. Page 23.

⁸ Glazier, Jack. *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 2.

much a specific country as it was a promise of new beginnings,” wrote Harold Troper. It was more like a dream with the promise of change and a beginning of a whole new life.

Looking at the activities of Jews in commerce prior to and during the first half of the 18th century, Jonathan Karp noted that “the pressing problem was Jewish occupational backwardness.” Even though arriving in America was an opportunity to start fresh, could these newcomers fit into a very different society? Since many of these immigrants were unskilled and perceived to be somewhat “backward”, I will argue that some Jewish philanthropic organizations adopted a series of measures that would address these worries and avoid any kind of undesired outcome. The goal for these organizations was to ensure that the Jews arriving would be seen in a new light, regardless of the existing preconceptions. To create a better perception of these immigrant Jews, philanthropic organizations in North America tried to associate this population with what they considered proper conduct and a work ethic that was highly indicative of a productive population – hard working people. Furthermore, these groups sought to adopt a program that would become influential in determining how these newcomers were seen in the eyes of the North American public – especially the non-Jewish community.

As a methodology, productivization had been discussed in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries by Jewish organizations, social activists, and philanthropists. People like Michael Heilprin, Baron Maurice de Hirsch and Edmond de Rothschild were some of the individuals who considered this approach as a helpful practice in the training of unskilled labour. These were individuals that supported Jewish farming settlements but had different approaches to organizing their creation. Michael Heilprin, originally an immigrant to the United States and a

strong advocate for East European refugees as farmers, commented that, “experience has shown that only such [Russian] Jewish immigrants can subsist on farming alone who begin with ample means and are armed with uncommon energy and patience.”⁹ Added to this, Heilprin believed that the creation of Jewish farming settlements would show how this kind of activity would influence the Gentile population to see Jews in a more positive light.

In the mid 1800’s, the perception of Jews across Europe had often been focused upon the less fortunate or the economically disadvantaged. Therefore, providing a vocation for these Jewish immigrants would add to the “improvement of the Jews’ environment...would improve their moral character...” and would enhance the Jewish image wrote Derek Penslar¹⁰ In this way, emphasizing productivity was anticipated to gradually strengthen the Jewish moral character – making them “more rational and useful beings.”¹¹ It would be a transformation that would change the perception of Jews to be a people no different than the gentile population.

In this dissertation, I will demonstrate that because of the influx of thousands of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, several Jewish philanthropies embraced the idea of productivization to help with the integration process. In keeping with this idea of productivization, Jewish immigrants to North America often were placed into programs, designed to make them appear as hard working, engaging, and productive people. The task was to improve the perception of Jews from an un-skilled and unproductive group, to industrious

⁹ Pollak, Gustav. *Michael Heilprin and His Sons: A Bibliography* (1912). Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1912. Page 218.

¹⁰ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock’s Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 22.

¹¹ Ibid.

and hard working. Since the established Jewish community in North America was anxious and concerned about the East European Jewish immigrants, advanced planning was deemed necessary. According to Cyril E. Leonoff, a Canadian historian on Jewish farmers, there was a long standing Jewish tradition to help their brethren, “not only for philanthropic but also for self-protection reasons.”¹² There was discussion by scholars of the period, that the idea of productivization might prevent what some believed could be a strong Anti-Semitic reaction against the unprecedented number of Jews arriving in North America.

In 1890, recognizing this growing problem associated with Jewish immigration, American Rabbi Marcus Jastrow addressed the gravity of the increasing level of anti-Semitism, saying that, “a drop of poison has been instilled into the blood of Western nations causing distemper contagious to its nature... the contagion has reached our beloved country and the poison too, has been imported...” In response to the situation a year later, the Jewish Alliance of America published a statement indicating the advantages of proactive immigrant direction. In the document, the writer alluded to the “sensitivity to non-Jewish opinion and to let the immigrants become farmers and make thereby the most effectual step to stamp out prejudice against the Jew.” It was abundantly clear that the bigger issue of anti-Semitism remained at the forefront of concern as Jewish groups in North America addressed the large number of immigrants. If these placement projects were unsuccessful, many within the Jewish community were afraid of the consequences that would ignite a backlash against all Jews.

When I began researching subject of productivization, it seemed that that term represented a response to a classical debate on Jewish integration. Prior to the beginning of mass migration to

¹² Leonoff, Cyril E. Personal Correspondence. March 24, 2010.

the West, Jewish cultural commentators and social activists had been addressing issues of modernizing the Jewish religion and cultural practice. Here I am referring to making changes to Jewish ways to become acceptable to the Gentile practices – for example, the Reform Judaism movement in the United States and Germany. In *Jewish Emancipation and Self Emancipation* (1986), Jacob Katz wrote that this era for Jews reflected a “disintegration of the traditional mode of life and the collapse of segregating barriers rendered outmoded their ties with the Jewish sphere of faith and with Jewish clannishness.”¹³ Over the years, other scholars have provided background to Jewish life in Eastern Europe prior to and during the onset of Jewish migration include; Michael Myer’s - *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (1990), Israel Bartal - *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881* (2005), David Berger - *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its Impact* (1983), Stephan M. Berk - *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (1985), David Sorkin – *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780-1840* (1999), David Vital – *The Origins of Zionism* (1975) and Steven J. Zipperstein – *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity* (1999) In all these publications, productivization was mentioned as an activity that could result training unskilled labour to become involved in a particular occupation. Over all, making Jews more productive or engaged within the gentile society – became the process of productivization.

In Chapter One of the dissertation, I begin by addressing the conditions in Eastern Europe which lead to the great Jewish migration after 1880. I explore a time when anti-Jewish feelings were growing across Eastern Europe. As some Jews just considered leaving, only a small

¹³ Katz, Jacob. *Jewish Emancipation & Self- Emancipation*. The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1986. Page 13.

number began the actual journey prior to 1890. For this preliminary group, there was a growing sense that conditions would worsen and the future was bleak. Fearful of the impending consequences and having an “extraordinary faith in the power of western Jewry,” many Russian Jews looked to the west for support and guidance according to Jonathan Frankel¹⁴ Even though leaving the region seemed like an inevitability, there was great concern that “any attempt at organized emigration was bound to bring down accusations of disloyalty upon the Jews and so undermine the case for equal rights, for emancipation.”¹⁵ This troublesome situation convinced some Jews that the proliferation of violent mob attacks on Jewish villages was a response to the Jews leaving the territory. However, as these problematic situations increased, there was a growing number that considered the increase of these destructive actions as a sign that it was time to leave. An example of this is found in a recent book by Dekel-Chen, Gaunt, (2011) concerning incidents involving the Kiev police raiding Jewish homes in the middle of the night searching for illegal residents.¹⁶ East European Jews, noted that these events were seen by local Russians as “a sign of the coming revolution and [they] interpreted the violence as the people’s retribution against Jewish exploitation.”¹⁷ Acknowledging the ongoing situation of discrimination and persecutions, it has been suggested that for some Jews their actions were a result of giving up hope; that change would never happen. The consequences of these

¹⁴ Frankel, Jonathan. “The Crisis of 1881-82: As a turning point in modern Jewish history” in Berger, David. *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its impact*. Atlantic Research and Publication, N.Y., 1983. Page 14.

¹⁵ Ibid, Page 15.

¹⁶ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan, Gaunt, David, Natan, Meir M. and Bartal, Israel. *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking The Pogrom in East European History*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2011. Page 118.

¹⁷ Ibid, Page 10.

situations only encouraged more Jews to feel disillusioned and eventually leave.

In the second chapter, the emphasis shifts from prevention of a large number of Jews leaving Eastern Europe, to the emergence of several Jewish philanthropic organizations addressing the mechanisms of integration in North America. Here I will detail how Jewish philanthropy groups gradually began working with a network of international organizations like Alliance Universelle Israelite, Jewish Colonization Association, Industrial Removal Office, and Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society. As the crisis in Eastern Europe intensified and immigration increased, this network of international cooperation between philanthropic agencies struggled to relocate the thousands of Jewish refugees with an emphasis on their positive perception.

The central question that plagued these organizations, was could they provide enough living spaces, jobs, medical care, etc, for the growing number of Jewish refugees arriving daily in North America in the late 1890's? Could the non-Jewish population in North America adjust to the increasing number of East European immigrants if the majority of them were unskilled, poor, and unable to speak English? With Jewish organizations concerned about the problematic consequences that could arise, the concept of productivization was part of the dialogue when it came to exploring options for relocating these Jewish immigrants. As one of several projects to resolve the vocational issue, the idea of farming settlements was an ideal method of making these immigrants more productive. As Jewish philanthropic agencies anticipated an increase in problematic conditions resulting from this massive influx of refugees, some groups tried to prepare for this situation by accepting the farming option. In this section, I will illustrate how Jewish organizations, set the groundwork by promoting specific programs – such as farming settlements in Canada and the United States. If these options were successful, it was

anticipated that the results would significantly influence the perception of Jewish immigrants, directly or indirectly.

In Chapter Three, I look at the creation of Jewish farming settlements in North America as a clear application of productivization of the thousands of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. According to Salo Baron “these endeavours bore fruit after, rather than before 1900, when the proportion of the Jewish farming population had risen.”¹⁸ In the same reference, Baron suggests that ‘productivization’ was “more significant upon Jewish and non-Jewish mentality than upon actual economic readjustment.”¹⁹ Even though farming was an idea that began attracting a good number of refugees, there were many logistical problems that contributed to the need for other options. Even though farming provided settlers with numerous options, some Jewish immigrants sought other programs that offered more.

For many Jewish newcomers who were unskilled, the farm served as one of the best expressions of productivization because of the work involved and where they were situated. Many Jewish organizations supported this option since farming would be seen by others as productive. In some cases, these newcomers might be looked upon as pioneers, taking serious risks within an undeveloped territory. For this reason, the farming settlement could place the new Jewish immigrants in a better position in the eyes of the general public. In this way, these so-called pioneers would be seen in a less negative light and would turn out completely different from the non-productive people that many had anticipated.

¹⁸ Baron, Salo W. “The Jewish Question in the Nineteenth Century”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Volume 10:1, 1938. Page 55.

¹⁹ Ibid.

In Chapter Four, with the situation for Jews across Eastern Europe deteriorating, several affluent members of the Russian Jewish community felt it necessary to intervene and stop the growing numbers of Jews from leaving. With the emergence of two Russian Jewish philanthropic organizations, there were three goals that had to be achieved: to improve opportunities for Jewish workers, improve the level of education for Jews, and give rise to a better perception of Jews. In order to do this, these organizations attempted to educate and train more Russian Jews. For these groups, the task was to integrate more trained Jews into the Russian economy as workers – productive elements working in conjunction with other Russians. The first group, known as the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (OPE), began by developing extensive training and education programs for Russian Jews. In an effort to exert its influence, OPE envisioned new relations between different political groups and levels of economic worth, the rich and the less well off, eventually arriving at new understandings of Jewish identity. The second organization was known as ORT, somewhat similar but more extensive in their efforts to continued to train and educate the less fortunate members of the Jewish Russian population. Although there was considerable effort by both groups, some Russian Jews believed that life for Jews in this part of the world would never change. With the scars of the past remaining so evident and present, Jews were making little headway. Even though some Russian Jews maintained a hope that change will come about through time, the occurrence of pogroms and other forms of discrimination across the region discouraged any hope. Not only did the pogroms reveal the overtly anti-Semitic character of Russian policy, the state of affairs that continued “bewildered the Jews, and then horrified

them, and finally caused vast numbers of them actively to seek a decisive remedy.”²⁰

Even with some progress, Jewish philanthropists in St. Petersburg were unsuccessful as they tried to move forward and improve the perception of Jews on the part of their fellow Russians. Unfortunately, the public perception of Jews in Russia was tainted by a history filled with confrontation and persecution. As I will show, these Jewish philanthropic initiatives would not be successful simply because the Russian perception of the Jewish community was very difficult to change. Even though the Russian philanthropies developed programs to elevate the skills, status and perception of the common Russian Jew, too much damage had been done. Productivization seemed like the best path to follow, but it was evident that the activities of OPE and ORT were too little, too late.

In Chapter Five, I argue that because of problematic conditions arising from the increasing number of East European immigrants, the creation of the Galveston Movement was another creative effort to respond to the deteriorating conditions caused by the increasing numbers of immigrants and overcrowding. More specifically, I will argue that this undertaking was influential and that it adopted the notion of productivization to influence how these immigrants were seen in the public. As thousands entered North America at several key entry ports specifically through New York City there was considerable overcrowding and insufficient services for the Jewish immigrant community. After years of planning, in 1907, the port of Galveston, Texas became a new point of entry for Jewish immigrants to ease the pressure on the East Coast. Through the efforts of the American Jewish banker Jacob H. Schiff and writer Israel Zangwill in Europe, part of the flow of immigrants was redirected to other regions of the

²⁰ Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975. Page 56.

United States. Over its existence, it should be recognized that this new port of entry did relieve the pressure from cities like New York. Even on a smaller scale, Galveston did contribute to a more effective entry of immigrants into Middle America.

According to Bernard Marinbach, the Galveston movement was created more “to prevent the enactment of legislation to restrict immigration,” than to improve Jewish integration. However, conditions for the processing of immigrants in America had reached a stage that certain regions were overcrowded. With immigrants overflowing in certain centres, this situation could contribute to an escalation in public resentment and the possibility of legislation that would limit the number of immigrants entering the United States. People like Bernard Marinbach have argued that it was because of the Galveston movement that the flow of immigrant Jews lasted as long as it did at the beginning. As a future consequence, it was this port of entry that provided a “continuing presence of Jewish communities in various cities of the American west” right up until this day.²¹ Consequently, although the Galveston movement was short termed, it served a purpose relocating many Jewish immigrants. More importantly, in its own way, this project was helpful as a mechanism to improved perception of these Jews that were arriving in a more positive light.

In Chapter Six, the discussion focuses on a series of projects to help integrate the East European immigrants in North America. Using a selection of activities and institutions, I will illustrate how philanthropic groups attempted to assimilate and create a new atmosphere around these newcomers. Through their efforts, they tried to create specialized opportunities

²¹ Marinbach, Bernard. *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*. State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y. 1983.
Page 121

to help the thousands of Jewish immigrant adjust to their new homeland. The purpose of this, as in other activities already mentioned, was to avoid validating a negative perception of Jews and thus foster the growth of anti-Semitism. During the time, it was believed that social engineering could be an effective means of addressing issues related to the problems associated with immigration. In most cases, there was no contradiction between simultaneous engagement in economic reconstruction and political action.²² As I will illustrate in the examples, these efforts were designed to improve conditions for new Jewish immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe. Whether through social clubs or educational programs, the task was to elevate the Jewish immigrant to one of a productive and valued citizen. Overall, these undertakings were a means for providing the building blocks for a productive and responsible Jewish community.

To begin my research, I set out to review the scholarly publications that were related to the period of massive Jewish immigration from 1880 until 1920. In an attempt to understand the early dimensions of productivization, I began reading David Sorkin (1999) and his perception of Jewish emancipation in pre-modern Germany. According to Sorkin, the discussion between Moses Mendelssohn and Christian Wilhelm von Dohm set the stage for a debate on the transformation of Jewish labour in Germany and the necessity for Jews to become more involved with farming and artisan work. For Sorkin, Dohm emphasized that “a prominent theme in Jewish emancipation would be occupational restructuring, moving the Jews out of commerce

²² Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 224.

into artisanry and other salubrious occupations.”²³ In other words, the emancipation of Jews in Germany would mark a new beginning through the successful restructuring of their role as labourers in order for them to be considered of greater value and productive members of the society. It was this idea of occupational restructuring that probably began this international narrative to change who and what Jews had become. One of the voices of this period was social commentator Charles Fourier and his followers in France. According to the Fourierist movement, there was only one option for dealing with Jews in general. Besides hating everything Jewish, Fourier and his followers also “touched upon the idea of rehabilitating the Jews by re-directing them towards agriculture.”²⁴ Fourierist philosophy was not based on ideas of actual Jewish productivity but rather how the “Jews are incapable of reconstituting themselves... (and) do not have the capacity to create a normal society.”²⁵ This was the start of a public discourse that would have consequential affects that would continue resonating both within France and throughout Europe for years to come: How could Jews be made to fit into society in a productive manner?

Seeking to understand the negative perception of Jews and the idea of occupational restructuring in Europe, Jonathan Karp (2008) provided a detailed background of the commercial role of Jews during the 17th and 18th centuries. Karp’s research suggests that “society in general and the Jews in particular will symbiotically benefit from the latter’s

²³ Sorkin, David. *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780-1840*. Wayne State University Press. 1999. Page 27.

²⁴ Silberner, Edmund. “The Attitude of the Fourierist School Towards The Jews”, *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 9:4, October 1947. Page 360.

²⁵ Ibid, Page 352.

occupational restructuring.”²⁶ Karp also argues that Dohm asserted that “Europe’s own flawed political arrangements, its constitution,” constructed the situation and perception of the Jews.²⁷ This contributed to increased thinking about productivization and the idea of restructuring the Jewish presence through Europe. Derek J. Penslar (2001) discusses how the Jews were “reminded” how others perceived their attributes that some referred to as defects or problems. According to Penslar, these imperfections were “in part imagined” and associated with “a host of Gentile stereotypes about the alleged physical, mental, and moral degeneracy of the Jews.”²⁸ This was a line of thinking that pushed toward empowering the Jewish person to be more productive and become an asset to the society.

In the course of this research, several publications suggested that this relationship was considered critical to the successful integration of the incoming Jewish immigrants. Theodore Norman’s 1985 book shows that the Jewish Colonization Association at times adopted this very position regarding productivity when relocating Jewish refugees. Norman refers to the idea of productivization, as a “movement which had great influence among Jews in the nineteenth century.... (something) based on the notion that anti-Semitism would decline, or even disappear, if Jews were to become engaged in manual labour,...”²⁹ This was a powerful theme that remained constant in many references to productivization. Returning to the theme of

²⁶ Karp, Jonathan. *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic thought and emancipation in Europe, 1638-1848*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge / New York, 2008. Page 132.

²⁷ Ibid. Page 133.

²⁸ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock’s Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 193.

²⁹ Norman, Theodore. *An Outstretched Arm – A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, England. 1985. Page 2

occupational restructuring, the association of Jewish immigrants and manual farm labour was a valuable model leading to successful integration in places such as Argentina. It was an idea that would grow in popularity as the number of Jewish immigrants increased daily across North America. At the forefront of this effort were people like Michael Heilprin (Pollack, 1912) and Baron de Hirsch (Joseph, 1978). They stood out as early and strong advocates of the relocation of East European Jews on farms. Both men supported the idea that Jewish philanthropic activities “ought to be founded on the principle of aiding those that aid themselves...”³⁰ Empowering people rather than providing welfare would be “the salvation of the Jewish people,” wrote Joseph Brandes³¹ The Baron de Hirsch was passionate about helping Jewish refugees find “peace and independence, love for the ground he tills and for freedom; and he will become a patriotic citizen of his new country.”³²

As found in many publications on the period of mass immigration to North America, this association between productivization and agriculture continued with greater emphasis on the role of Jewish farmers as pioneers. Although much of the material is scattered with no real comprehensive publication existing on this era of farming, there is a general consensus regarding Jewish agriculture as a failure that underscores the subject matter. The history of Jewish farmers and the benefits arising from Jewish contributions to agriculture North America

³⁰ Pollak, Gustav. *Michael Heilprin And His Sons: A Bibliography* (1912). Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1912. Page 216

³¹ Brandes, Joseph. *Immigrants To Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey Since 1882*. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1971. Page 92

³² Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund – The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 2

continues to be portrayed as disorganized failure rather than a model for integrating immigrants to North America. Outside this investigation, however, Jonathan Dekel-Chen (2005) presents a revised picture of our knowledge of agricultural development by Jews post 1920 in the Soviet Union. Dekel-Chen's review illustrates the benefits that arose with the expansion and support of Jewish Russian farmers during the early years of the Soviet Union. Perhaps this renewed interest in Jewish farmers contributed to the dedication of a complete issue of the journal *Jewish History* (2007) to a series of articles reflecting the emergence of Jewish farmers in an assortment of geographic regions. Contributors to this review touched on aspects of the idea of productivization as an early variable contributing to Jewish farming settlements. Jonathan Dekel-Chen (2007) and Jonathan Dekel-Chen and Israel Bartal (2007) are examples of the authors that recall the role of productivization and the value of Jewish farmers in the late 19th century with regard to the placement of immigrants.

With the exception of Derek Penslar's (2001) extensive inquiry into the economic role of productivization and identity, there have been only a few scholarly publications on the subject. Most of the early references have been short and only minimized the role of productivization throughout Jewish history. Having said this, I believe that the discussions found in both Leon Shapiro (1980) and Brian Horowitz (2009) provided a good basis for the application of productivization early on, though with limited coverage in Eastern Europe. Accordingly, both publications discussed the idea of productivization as something closely resembling a mechanism for improved integration and for the transformation of the role of Jews in society. However, conditions previous to this period only blocked any possible kind of progress.

With the scholarship relating to the beginning of the great wave of Jewish migration from Eastern Europe to North America during the late 19th century, the notion of productivization was discussed to a great extent regarding the development of farming settlements. As Jewish philanthropies became more and more concerned with thousands of newcomers arriving unprepared for North American society, and the possible rise of anti-Semitism, redirecting a portion of the new arrivals to farming settlements became a popular solution that would change the situation. People like Joseph Kage (1966), Samuel Joseph (1978), Tobias Brinkmann (2007) and Israel Bartal (2002), conveyed the possibilities and problematic conditions for Jewish immigrants but only alluded to the idea of productivization. It is as if, there was an effort to change the perception of East European immigrants called productivization, and then the authors moved on to something else.

In the publications used in this study focusing on Jewish immigration to North America in the 19th and 20th century, most scholars' spoke of a concern about a possible backlash to the influx of Jews. While I found references to productivization in this context, the concern was overtly present and widespread. Gur Alroey (2012), attempts to redirect these concerns and the causes for Jewish immigration by emphasizing how most immigrants were concerned primarily about the availability of work and that there were a variety of opportunities. Alroey states that his research analyzing many immigrant letters from the period to verify that many Jews were more preoccupied with finding work that was stable. Even Andrew R. Heinze's (1990) discourse on the transformation of Jewish immigrants as they attempted to find their place in America, reveals a more primary desire to purchase consumer goods so as to fit in and become just like

every other American. Jewish people wanted to fit in and their actions and role in the society would help this desire to become less Eastern European and more American.

In summary, this dissertation addresses deliberate strategies that were influenced by a methodology known as productivization that I would argue some philanthropic organizations adopted. In essence productivization reflected a unique strategy that would have a powerful impact, and that would influence the placement of East European Jews. The idea was to create situations where these immigrants could be considered productive and essential contributors to the growth of the country of settlement. It was an effort to combat the negative perception of East European Jews and to prevent anything that would add to a backlash against the immigrant Jewish community as a whole.

For North American Jews, helping their brethren was a major obligation. However, there was no escaping that “they also believed that anti-Semitism, parading under the banner of nativism, made no distinction between Jews of German or Russian origin.”³³ In consideration of the possible explosive circumstances, I will show how the concept of productivization was employed as a mechanism to address what could have emerged as a major problem for thousands of East European Jewish immigrants arriving between 1880 and 1920.

Since this concern with integration can be associated with what has been called “the Jewish Question”- perhaps the idea of productivization emerged at the right place in time. It was a creative method and perhaps the best method that could respond to an issue such as this. This was a question that placed the Jews on the defensive. In other words, it was a message that

³³ Glazier, Jack. *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 58.

stated: play by our (societies) rules, or you will be cast out. Such an inquiry adumbrated an eventual confrontation that set parameters for how society will develop, and what role the Jewish population could play in it. Although anti-Semitism was never eliminated, the North American Jewish community was able to adapt and eventually flourish. For that community, adopting a methodology such as productivization was only a small part of a larger story. But the idea of productivization did contribute to the evolution of the Jewish community in North America that has today become one of two great world Jewish communities flourishing on this planet.

Chapter 1

The factors contributing to Jewish migration after 1880

In this chapter, the circumstances leading up to the migration of Jews from Eastern Europe are explored. The purpose of this review is to examine certain factors that may have contributed to the massive exodus of Jews migrating to North America. Consideration is also given to the role of personal expectations within the migrant community due to an environment of restrictions and persecutions. After an extensive period of limited economic participation and social integration in Eastern Europe, Jews native to the region began to consider the option of leaving for a land of opportunity and greater freedom. With the growing desire for a new way of life, East European Jews gradually followed in the footsteps of others and made their way westward. In the late 1890s, this situation would little by little lead to the largest migration of Jews up until that time and eventually contribute to establishment of the largest Jewish community outside Israel in the 21st century.

The term “Eastern European Jews” encompasses a population stemming from different geographic regions stretching across Eastern Europe and made up of the Russian Empire (including Poland and Lithuania), the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and parts of Germany. For centuries Jews lived within and migrated across this vast geographic region in search of work, a place to live, and to practice their religion. Jacob Katz (1998) discusses the profound social, political and economic changes that were revolutionary for Jews prior to the 19th century. Katz writes that, “nowhere was life affected more deeply than in the Jewish community, which

existed among these nations and was regarded until then as apart from the rest.”³⁴ For Katz, he describes how Jews would live alongside, but apart from Gentile villages or towns simply because they had lived this way for many centuries as a means to strengthen and maintain the community’s way of life. With time and less limitations, the emancipation of Jews created new opportunities and possibilities for Jews to flourish. This was a period when European nations were experiencing socio-political transformation. These were changes, according to Jacob Katz, that seemed “to have gone deeper in the case of the Jews.... ”.³⁵ In Western Europe, the very structure of the Jewish community was evolving and affecting the status of Jews throughout the continent. Because of this, the role of the Jew was changing to become a citizen, someone that is now part of a nation - for example, a French Jew, German Jew or Russian Jew. What this meant was that Jews were now part of society and did not need to reside on the outskirts of the community. There was no longer the need for an independent corporation responsible for Jewish affairs. These changes transferred the control of the hitherto autonomous community (Kahal), to the local government of the region. Across Western Europe, these changing roles would open certain doors for Jews while others remained closed.

In the 18th century, the movement for Jewish emancipation began in the West and gradually moved eastward. Its beginnings “occurred more or less simultaneously... [and] followed a similar, if not identical course,” in each region, writes Jacob Katz.³⁶ Accordingly, these changes

³⁴ Katz, Jacob. *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1998. Page 1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, Page 3.

redirected the Jewish community from a traditional based society, to a more open association within a modern secular state. Confronted by these new parameters, Jews debated and looked for the best way to maintain their religious ways and cultural practices. If and when these changes were to take place, would Jews adjust or would this cause havoc and discord? More importantly, would Judaism continue as it was or would it disappear? For centuries, Jews had maintained a closed society that served as a mechanism for cultural protection, and for maintaining the status quo. According to traditional Judaic teachings, only the arrival of the Messiah would bring about a transformation and an end to a life in exile for the Jewish people. Until such time, changes to Jewish life should be minor while the core ideas remained fortified.

Focussing on Eastern Europe in the 1800s, it is apparent that the dynamics of Jewish life were consistently problematic. For a short period in the late 1700's, writes Heiko Haumann, "Russia was far ahead of all other European countries in respect to the equal treatment of the Jews."³⁷ However the situation began to deteriorate as the Jewish population expanded and flourished with the break-up of Poland. Part of the problem was connected with what Russian gentiles thought they knew about the "chosen people". The average Russian's, education was limited and so was his knowledge about Jewish people. Who and what was a Jew, was learned from personal experience and other people. No doubt whatever information was conveyed about Jews was presented in a negative manner and only contributed to creating further distance between the Jewish and non-Jewish populations. There was also the perception of Jews as lazy and reluctant to work. Many Gentiles would come to believe that the "Jews disdained physical

³⁷ Haumann, Heiko. A History of East European Jews. Central European University Press, Budapest / New York, 2002. Page 82.

labour as something best left to Christians. They (Jews) sought an easy life, at the expense of their gentile neighbours, especially the peasantry.” This was an assumption that gentiles attributed to Jews or was it a reflection of how the Jews behaved toward the gentiles?³⁸ In any case, this was one of many assertions reflecting the way Jews were perceived, and this was based more on interpretive perspectives than facts. Throughout the period, such attitudes served to strengthen the assumptions that Jews had about the Gentiles and Gentiles about the Jews. What was fact and what was fiction was often influenced by social or economic distortions. It was an era when this way of thinking was empowered by attitudes of superiority of one group over another – in the end, there was no victor. Although some members of the population were well to do, the majority, whether Gentile or Jewish, were quite poor and struggled to survive.

Throughout the Jewish community of Eastern Europe, there were only a small number of wealthy Jews, many involved with international trade, banking and business. This meant that the Jewish majority lived less affluently and was economically limited. As part of their lifestyle, Jews lived apart from the Gentiles and were dedicated to their religious way of life. This, of course, was not helpful when it came to how others would perceive Jews. The idea of Jews as the “chosen people” living separately from non-Jews, must have contributed to the problematic perception of Jews by the Gentile population – especially the less fortunate. Since most Jews were dedicated to following a religious lifestyle, the Gentile population assumed “that Jews

³⁸ Klier, John Doyle. *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge / New York, 1995. Page 2.

were an unproductive, parasitical class”³⁹. Believing this was no surprise from a Gentile’s perspective, since they were also seen as “an economically parasitic class of permanent aliens who lacked profound attachments to the soil or the soil or to legitimate forms of labour....”⁴⁰ The Jew was a misunderstood part of the society and the Gentile population appeared uninterested in finding the truth. Until this perception would change, the confrontational relationship continued.

During the reign of Tsar Nicholas I, efforts were made in the Russian Empire to improve relations with the Jewish community by establishing what was called an office of the Jewish expert. For whatever reasons this action was taken, this person was to serve as a liaison between the Jews in a region and the local government. From another perspective, this form of liaison served more as a means to control the Jewish population, than to understand or improve its status within society. Prior to this arrangement, each individual community of Jews had responsibility for its own population, particularly collecting taxes that would be passed on to the local government. In the mid 1800s, a statute was passed “which attempted to attract the Jews to agriculture and other productive livelihoods.”⁴¹ At the time, this legislation met with only minor success as very few Jews chose this option. In search of a reason for this, it was assumed that the insignificant Jewish integration into Russian society actually originated in the Jewish educational system. Since the Russian leadership realized that there would be little if any change as long as the Jewish educational system continued, changes were suggested for

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., Page 4.

the Jewish teaching program. In hindsight, it could be said that many of these confrontations were the result of the Jews living in their own world while the Gentiles functioned similarly.

In 1844, a Russian Minister, P.D. Kiselev, was assigned to head a “Committee for the Transformation of the Jews”. As part of this committee’s mandate, members were to explore the reasons why Jews living within the Empire were not integrating into the greater society. As part of the findings of this committee, a distinction was made between two kinds of Jews based on activity and value – that is, there were useful Jews and useless Jews. The description of “useful Jews” was associated with “Jewish merchants, tradesmen, who were formally enrolled in a craft guild, farmers, and Jewish town people.... pursued a settled way of life and owned some real estate.”⁴² Contrary to this, the group of Jews referred to as “useless” were general workers, townspeople and unemployed. Jews of this classification were also eligible for extensive military service. For the purpose of understanding the gradual emergence of a negative perception of Jews, this designation of “useful/useless” Jews needs to be noted. The label of “useless Jew” was often applied even though the person was actively engaged in an occupation that was considered “useful”. Often the term was applied as a general reference to Jews simply because of the imbalance in the relationship Jews had with the Gentile community.

As the notion of citizenship began changing across Western Europe, the situation within Eastern Europe was behind the times. As Jews adjusted to these changing circumstances, strong ties to Christianity may perhaps have influenced the course of changes in particular regions. In his book on anti-Semitism, Leon Poliakov used a quote from a medieval Christian scholar known

⁴² Ibid.

as Erasmus of Rotterdam that reflects an important perception of Jews. According to Poliakov, Erasmus stated that: “if it is the part of a good Christian to detest the Jews, then we are all good Christians.”⁴³ In other words, it was important that Christians continue to maintain their anti-Jewish perspective as a standard of their beliefs. Not surprisingly, this attitude not only remained a part of many Christian societies throughout the middle ages, but was a continuous anti-Jewish attitude that has historic roots and future influences. Even though several countries across Western Europe were gradually adjusting to the changes brought about by the emancipation of the Jews, the effects of Christian thought was still influenced by thinkers such as Erasmus. Poliakov reminds us that for certain Christians, “this antagonism seemed to feed on itself, irrespective of whether or not Jews inhabited a given territory. If the Jew no longer dwelt there, he was invented...”⁴⁴ In other words, clearly a suggestion that this perception of Jews for the future would be difficult to change.

Looking back at the late 18th century, scholars of Jewish life in East Europe have written consistently how Jews suffered from incidents of direct abuse or indirect social and economic prejudice. Commenting on that era, Zosa Szajkowski referred to this abuse as a “chronic phenomenon” for which there seemed to be no end in sight.⁴⁵ It was a period with a long history of restrictive laws and limitations, as Jews endured “profound and violent hostility”

⁴³ Poliakov, Leon. *The History of Anti-Semitism*. Schocken Books, New York, 1976. Page 123.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Szajkowski, Zosa. “How The Mass Migration To America Began”. *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 4:4, October 1942. Page 294.

throughout Eastern Europe.⁴⁶ In addition to the forced settlement of Jews in a region known as the Pale of Settlement, economic limitations only increased social tensions between Jews and Gentiles.⁴⁷ Thus it has been suggested that because of these living conditions, the region was somewhat of a “pressure cooker” waiting to explode. It was only a matter of time until this happened.

In the later part of the 18th century, there was a gradual movement of some Jewish families leaving Eastern Europe. As socioeconomic difficulties increased some Jews learned that life in the West offered greater opportunities and freedom from persecution. Gur Alroey (2011) suggests that they were influenced by correspondence from family and friends living in North America, and that these letters were powerful incentives that he believes encouraged many Jews to attempt this journey. As interest in North America slowly increased, local information offices started to appear in some towns throughout Eastern Europe. Operated by the Jewish Colonization Association, these regional offices were opened with the idea that many Jews were considering leaving, and required guidance. Each bureau served as an outlet to “answer questions of prospective emigrants, to help them get passports, and sometimes to give them financial assistance.”⁴⁸ When the first Russian Jews made their way westward, many had high expectations of what life would be like. The perception of a land of opportunity probably strengthened their resolve to make this long voyage. Even though some Jews departed through

⁴⁶ Berger, David. *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its impact*. Atlantic Research and Publication, N.Y. 1983. Page 12.

⁴⁷ Silber, Jacques. “Some Demographic Characteristics of the Jewish Population in Russia at the End of the 19th Century”. *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 42: 3/4, 1980. Page 269.

⁴⁸ Alroey, Gur. *Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 17.

the official means available, acquiring exit papers and passports, others did not. Those who could not get their hands on these official documents had to follow an unsecure and dangerous route of departure. Leaving Eastern Europe, refugees both official and unofficial ended up in the Galician town of Brody where they waited for transportation across the ocean. As the numbers of people began increasing in Brody, it was clear that there was no organized program operating in the early 1890s. Looking back at this, it seemed that Jewish agencies in Europe were uncertain how to handle this problematic situation. Consequently, the pressure from these circumstances forced the philanthropic community to address this situation and take the appropriate actions. At first, there were political issues blocking any constructive activities such as whether or not Russian Jews should be directed to Western European countries or America.⁴⁹ Responding to the request from American groups to delay sending more refugees, the European philanthropies delayed the flow of people. With the numbers of Jews arriving in North America becoming overwhelming, American organizations had difficulty processing the newcomers that were arriving. However, the flow into places like Brody continued as the number of Jews leaving Eastern Europe increased.

In Brody, because the quantity of refugees ballooned, agents of the Alliance Israelite Universelle were forced to send some people back from where they came and gradually increased the numbers sent to America without approval.⁵⁰ The crowding of refugees into Brody originated because there was no official agreement at the onset amongst the

⁴⁹ Szajkowski, Zosa. "How The Mass Migration To America Began". *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 4:4, October 1942. Page 295.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

philanthropic groups. With the ongoing problem of overcrowding on both sides of the ocean, the situation revealed how unorganized and complex the conditions were becoming while little was being done. In an article published in the early 1940's, Szajkowski revealed how a spokesperson for the Alliance, Isidore Loeb, tried unsuccessfully to convince the French ambassador to intervene on behalf of the Russian Jews in early 1887.⁵¹ Since French officials were reluctant to instigate any tension between France and Russia, the actions of the Alliance were limited. In America, as the numbers of refugees increased, North American organizations were concerned that this chaos could possibly trigger greater problems. Between a state of overcrowding and the continuous flow of refugees flooding into major cities on the east coast of the United States, concern over the rise in anti-Semitism was on the minds of many Jews in the West and across Eastern Europe. The problems resulting from an abundance of Jewish refugees would be certainly perceived both in Europe and North America as originating within the Jewish community. No doubt some social circles were liable to look at the Jews once again as a source of social tribulations, a perception many believed would lead to an increase in anti-Semitism.

For Jews living in Eastern Europe, anti-Semitism was not a new phenomenon but something that many were familiar with on almost an everyday basis. An example of this fear is conveyed by Gur Alroey who provides examples of the insecurity of Jews in Russia. In a letter to family in North America, a member of a Russian Jewish family writes that it did not "feel any solid ground

⁵¹ Ibid. Page 294.

under its feet, and its (members') lives are in danger."⁵² For many Jews living in Eastern Europe, poverty and barely surviving were only part of their troubles. Even though there was a growing effort to improve at the onset of the 1900's, many Jews were not finding those opportunities. Throughout the labour force, it was clear that most Jews were not treated the same as Gentiles. Whether it was regarding a particular job or receiving adequate wages for their efforts, Jews were treated as second class citizens.

Looking back at the year 1881, with political unrest peaking after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, this time stood out as a turning point for the situation in Eastern Europe. What followed were scattered incidents of violence and deteriorating social conditions with Jews becoming the main targets of aggressive actions. With an increase in the number of mob attacks, people were killed, injured, and robbed, as Jews became the focus of responsibility once again for the troubles of a state. During this period of social agitation and considerable Jewish persecution, the Russian political leadership remained silent. According to a report in a regional Russian newspaper, these events were not only fueled by political rhetoric but also by lack of governmental preventative action. In the same report, the cause for the turmoil was the "presence in Russia of alien, scheming Jews who were not only perverting the established Russian Christian order, but were somehow also guilty of the murder of the Tsar".⁵³ Since one of the people involved in the assassination was Jewish, the Russian leadership used this to their

⁵² Alroey, Gur. *Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 42.

⁵³ Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 44.

advantage in every possible way. Conditions that as in past, only fuelled the rhetoric and focused the direction of violence on a familiar target.

Later in 1882, the Russian government passed a series of decrees known as *Maiiskie Pravila* (the May Laws). This was legislation that not only increased the limitations imposed on the Jewish population, but once again emphasized the source of the problematic events as the Jews. Expanding on previous restrictions and limitations, these laws continued to limit where Jews could live, purchase property and “deal with goods produced by their own hands.”⁵⁴ As the situation went from bad to worse, many within the Jewish community throughout the Empire began “to see their salvation in emigration.”⁵⁵ With an increase in restrictive laws and continued physical confrontations, the future for Jews appeared distressing. Added to this, letters arriving from relatives and friends in America were describing a way of life that was very different, with plenty of opportunities and freedom. Frequently associated with these descriptions was the phrase that in America, the “streets were paved with gold” – an idea that no doubt contributed to the consideration of some to leave for a better lifestyle.

Undoubtedly these new restrictive laws resulted in increasing social tensions and economic pressure on Jews throughout the Russian Empire. Taking little if any responsibility for events, the Russian leadership argued that the violence and elevation of social tensions was not “an uprising exclusively against the Jews, but something motivated by the desire to create disorder

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

in general” wrote John Klier.⁵⁶ In other words, Klier is suggesting that the Russian leadership continued to spin the circumstances to assert that all the so-called attacks on Jews were initiated to disrupt a functioning Russian government. These problematic events were designed to not just to destabilize the Russian Empire, but also to create circumstances that could lead to an eventual political revolution. Since this alluded to the Jews as the force behind the movement to disrupt and destabilize Russia, the allegation supported a persistent accusation that there was a secret plan organized by Jews to control and rule the world. During this period, the legend, known as “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, with probable Russian origins, began to circulate. For example, a portion of the 6th Protocol states: “we shall soon begin to establish huge monopolies, colossal reservoirs of wealth, upon which even the big Gentile properties will be dependent to such an extent that they will fall together...”⁵⁷ Even though many Russians were illiterate and could not read this text, the ideas contained on its pages became well known and flourished among the non-Jewish population. Because of this association, the Jews both within Eastern Europe and elsewhere were considered both as the source and the focus of the unrest. For others, the Protocols were an authentication of their perception of what Jews were up to and the logic behind the events of the day.

This idea of a secret narrative and subversive agenda associated with the Jews is not new. Consideration should be given to events of a similar nature throughout European history such as when Jews were accused of causing the Black Death that devastated most of Europe during

⁵⁶ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA, 2009. Page 72.

⁵⁷ Marsden, Victor E.(Trans) *The Protocols of Zion*. Publisher unknown, 1934. Page 41.

the Middle-Ages.⁵⁸ It was a form of social hysteria resulted in the creation of cultural myths that have endured and influenced the perception of Jews in many situations. This is a reoccurring theme across European society with respect to something known as “the Jewish question”. This perception of a clandestine Jewish agenda influenced the emergence of a discussion of a major social problem known as “the Jewish Question.”

For Alex Bein, the “Jewish Question” goes back many centuries but was re-introduced into the modern European consciousness around 1842 by Bruno Bauer (Bein, page 19).⁵⁹ Although translated as the “Jewish Question”, a better explanation for the German term “Judenfrage” is “the Jewish problem”. Bruno Bauer and others who used the term, actually intended to address what they considered to be the “problem of integrating the Jews in the states and societies of the Christian peoples of Europe”. The idea behind the Jewish Question was not just a stereotypical perception, but a form of justification supporting the idea that the Jews were a source for something negative. How this question was addressed reflected how that society perceived the role of Jews within that society.

Returning to the context of Eastern Europe, Jonathan Frankel makes reference to an official Russian document that presents the argument that much harm was caused to “the Christian population by the activity of the Jews with their tribal exclusiveness... religious fanaticism... and exploitation.”ⁱ Thus religious hatred of Jews unquestionably infested Eastern Europe and was seen as the justification for the Russian government’s action to enforce its anti-Jewish policies. This discourse established Jews as a separate and very different component within Russian

⁵⁸ Poliakov, Leon. *The History of Anti-Semitism*. Schocken Books, New York, 1976. Page 101.

⁵⁹ Bein, Alex. *The Jewish Question – Bibliography of a World Problem*. Herzl Press, Rutherford, 1990. Page 19

society. Consequently, Jews were considered as a source of problematic economic and political crises. Given the existence of such thinking, it is no surprise that the emergence of a strong Jewish movement for self emancipation materialized and began asserting ideas of change and liberation for Jews. Emerging in the form of a nationalistic expression, a strong self empowering narrative emanated from people like Leon Pinsker, Peretz Smolenskin and Theodore Herzl. According to their writings, these men constituted some of the voices that attempted to make Jews think about themselves and their living conditions whether in Russia or elsewhere. These were Jewish activists that advocated empowerment – and a path that would elevate the community away from accepting the role of victim. Their ideas would also serve to create a political philosophy known as Zionism. In time, this ideology set the stage for more resilient self-perceptions and pointed the Jewish community toward a different future by addressing the inadequate conditions Jews were living under.

For Leon Pinsker conditions within the Russian Empire helped create the negative perception of Jews and what he called Judeophobia. It was this idea that became the empowering component behind his thinking of changing the Jewish condition. Pinsker's use of the phrase, "Russia hated the Jews long before she knew them," expressed the reality of a long history of anti-Jewishness.⁶⁰ Although this negative perception of Jews prevailed, Pinsker also asserted that within each Jew there remained an inner light that was unable to be destroyed – "the feeling of national independence..." For Pinsker, this "inner light" was a true feeling of the essence of Judaism and he suggested that Jews "seek our honour and our salvation not in

⁶⁰ Pinsker, Leo. *Road to Freedom: Writings and Addresses*. Scopus Publishing Company, New York, 1944. Page 14.

illusory self-deceptions, but in the restoration of a national bond of union.”⁶¹ This meant there was a collective sense that could transform the Jews - a form of self liberation that Pinsker called “auto emancipation”. In this idea, he recognized how the Jews of Eastern Europe could change their situation “only by changing their place of residence and their mode of life.”⁶² The simple answer to a complex problem could only be found in how and where the Jews would live. However, since this was an international Jewish issue, the issue could not be resolved except by the international Jewish community.

Pinsker was only one person advocating for big changes in the Jewish world. Another influential person with similar ideas of Jewish liberation was another Russian, Peretz Smolenskin. After the pogroms of 1881, Smolenskin altered his thinking on immigration to America and the Jewish people. Working from the premise that change must occur, he advocated that this was the time for building a new life for Jews in the ancient land of Israel. With events in Eastern Europe deteriorating, and tensions and atrocities increasing, he wrote “if anyone had told the Jews of Russia of the impending disaster even a month before it came, he would have been mocked as a madman”.⁶³ In the same publication, Smolenskin reflects on how those who were preoccupied with “Haskalah” (enlightenment), were deceived that this innovation would improve the Jewish situation in Eastern Europe. It seemed that no matter

⁶¹ Ibid. Page 91.

⁶² Ibid. Page 106.

⁶³ Hertzberg, Arthur (Ed). *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Temple Books – Atheneum. New York, 1986. Page 149.

what form of change was adopted, the perception by Gentiles of Jews would never change. In the eyes of non-Jews, Jews were always considered Jews.

Smolenskin wasn't a person impressed with the enlightenment argument, nor did he believe in the idea that once the Jews achieved equal status the Gentiles would welcome Jews with open arms. Smolenskin wrote that improving conditions for Jews could only be made possible through immigration to the one place where he believed Jews could succeed and that was "Eretz Israel". Through agriculture, commerce and industry, there was "reason to hope that those that settled there will succeed," wrote Smolenskin.⁶⁴ If the less fortunate were to be helped and set free from the prison of Eastern Europe, all efforts should be directed toward making this liberation possible.

Smolenskin was a strong advocate that the solution for Jews across Eastern Europe was to create agricultural settlements in the land of Israel. He was optimistic about the idea, writing, "let us neither be still nor quiet until the light dawns and causes our healing to begin."⁶⁵ While there were certain people who agreed with Smolenskin, there remained a strong opposition that felt that an answer could only be found within the Russian Empire. However given the continuing assaults and limitations, the Jews of Eastern Europe seemed to be an endangered species.⁶⁶ However, Smolenskin was optimistic that a solution could be found if there was

⁶⁴ Ibid. Page 153.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bein, Alex. *The Jewish Question – Bibliography of a World Problem*. Herzl Press, Rutherford, 1990. Page 282.

movement to liberate Jews and relocate them away from the harmful environment of the Russian Empire.

Another voice added to this chorus for change in the late 1890's, spurred on by the events in Europe, spoke of "the misery of the Jews" as a driving force that he believed would bring about the Jewish State.⁶⁷ Based on his experiences as a reporter and his concern for Jews in Russia, Theodore Herzl envisioned a new Jewish State that could elevate the Jewish people and create a society that was "necessary for the world...".⁶⁸ Herzl believed that his words provided a sense of hope and set the stage for improving conditions for Jews all around the world. In his writings and lectures, Herzl offered a sense of optimism where there was considerable discouragement and frustration. He wrote that "the Jewish state opens bright prospects of freedom, happiness and honour, [and] will ensure the propagation of an idea."⁶⁹ Herzl's narrative also provided a new direction that Jewish people would hear and follow. His writings and campaigning created an ongoing impression that Jews were on the move and that times were changing. As Herzl continued, support for his ideas spread and gained popularity as the impossible became the probable.

Theodore Herzl promoted a political ideology known as Zionism. His goal was to establish the Jews within a national Jewish homeland. While international Jewish philanthropic groups made efforts to aid Eastern European Jews, Herzl was somewhat critical of these organizations

⁶⁷ Herzl, Theodore. *The Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*. Herzl Press, New York, 1975. Page 31.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Page 33.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

involved in the resettlement of this population. In his book, “The Jewish State”, he writes that these “charitable institutions are not for, but against persecuted Jews.”⁷⁰ He pointed out that these philanthropic organizations were not doing what should have been done and profiled what was needed. Transplanting the Jews around the world was not the best answer – Jewish people needed a homeland and this was a priority above all else for many reasons. “Careful inspection” wrote Herzl, “revealed many an apparent friend of the Jews to be merely an anti-Semite of Jewish origin dressed up as a philanthropist.”⁷¹ From these strong words Herzl’s frustrations with these philanthropic organizations were revealed. Because of his inability to persuade people like the Baron de Hirsch and the members of the Rothschild family to establish a Jewish homeland, Hirsch was disappointed in the efforts of organizations supported by these individuals. He felt these groups were regressive rather than progressive.⁷² However, according to Herzl, “no one is wealthy or powerful enough to make civilization take a single step backward.”⁷³

While people like Herzl, Smolenskin, Pinsker, and several international organizations were advocating the movement of Jews out of Eastern Europe, there were some Jews who tried to settle in the Middle-East. These individuals were looked upon as pioneers who were passionate about their task. Their desire and passion was to rebuild the ancient land for several reasons – the Jews needed a homeland, there was no other choice, and it was their ancient right to live in

⁷⁰ Ibid. Page 45.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975. Page 249.

⁷³ Hertzberg, Arthur (Ed). *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Temple Books – Atheneum. New York, 1986. Page 217

this land. The creation of “European-styled colonies by these immigrants of the first Aliya” began prior to the organized Zionist efforts.⁷⁴ These early settlements and Jewish life overall in Palestine struggled to survive, and there was a high degree of failure. If not for the intervention by the wealthy Jewish philanthropist Edmond de Rothschild, these settlements would have been eliminated quickly instead of becoming the basis for future growth. Concerned about his co-religionists, Rothschild supported numerous farming settlements scattered across the countryside that provided settlers with a livelihood and a response to anti-Semitic ramblings.⁷⁵ Rothschild did what he could to help these early farmers develop and market their products with only little success.⁷⁶ Regardless of a strong desire and creativity, there were too many problems that plagued these settlements. As a consequence, it seemed that the entire undertaking was doomed to eventually fail. Realizing this possible outcome, the Jewish Colonization Association stepped in to take over the support of these farmers and attempt to better manage these settlements. With gradual improvements and fortitude, these settlements became stronger as the number of immigrants slowly increased and enabled the birth of Israel in 1948.

Although Palestine for the East European Jews was seen as an opportunity, there was much to be done. For Herzl, there were many issues to consider. At the top of his list, he was concerned about the movement of East European Jews, and the problems associated with re-

⁷⁴ Kellerman, Aharon. *Society and Settlement*. State University of New York Press, 1993. Page 48.

⁷⁵ Norman, Theodore. *An Outstretched Arm – A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, England. 1985. Page 55.

⁷⁶ Ibid. Page 56.

settlement.⁷⁷ From his writings, it appears that Herzl wanted to remain open to other locations for a new Jewish homeland. Herzl was no different than other social activists and was cautious. During his lifetime, Herzl realized the sensitivity of the political situation and how such a little piece of land was the basis of “all of the hatred against us...”.⁷⁸ In a world that most often maintained that Jews were not hard workers or productive individuals, the effort to establish a homeland would be challenging.

For the purpose of this research, the question isn’t who developed a particular concept or direction of Zionism, but rather to recognize that there were new ways of thinking about the Jewish condition of which Zionism was one. At this point, I would argue that Jewish nationalistic thinking regardless of the spokesperson was more than just to establish a national “homeland”. It was rather a way to empower or raise the consciousness of Jews to begin taking more responsibility for their situation. This meant to break away from a feeling of inability to change things and become more proactive. Clearly the writings of people like Pinsker or Herzl were also intended to “touch a nerve” and to stimulate social transformation, setting up a model that a community can strive for and use to create such a reality.

According to Alex Bein, only “when personal leadership abilities are joined by external circumstances... [can this] make larger number of people realize the need for change, so the words turn into seeds that bring forth blossoms and fruit.”⁷⁹ For Bein, these so-called “seeds”

⁷⁷ Ibid. Page 36.

⁷⁸ Ibid. Page 57.

⁷⁹ Bein, Alex. *The Jewish Question – Bibliography of a World Problem*. A Herzl Press Publication, Rutherford, 1990. Page 287.

were more than just “the truth and depth of his insight that usually distinguishes a so-called precursor from the inspirer of a political movement. The decisive factor was whether or not the time is ‘ripe’ for new ideas.”⁸⁰ As events began changing politically and the situation across Eastern Europe became intensely more difficult for Jews, it seemed that the time was ripe for action to be taken beyond running from country to country. This meant that the idea of believing in a homeland instead of “the aimless, precipitous overseas emigration... assumed ever greater dimensions, in an effort to breathe new life into the country that was to become the homeland of the dispersed people again.”⁸¹ While some Jews hoped for change in Eastern Europe, others made their way to North America, South America and a trickle to Palestine. In hindsight, what began as a dialogue on self emancipation would gradually emerge as a movement to recreate a strong and emancipated Jewish community. Whether the destination was Palestine or North America, the goal was to liberate and re-establish a people; to go beyond political emancipation and realize that life could no longer flourish if the status quo continued, whether in Eastern Europe or throughout the world.

Beginning at some point in the 1880s, Jews gradually began leaving Eastern Europe. With many headed to North America, and smaller groups to South America, a smaller number headed to the Middle East. Statistics for the year 1905 as an example revealed that 137,037 Jews left the Russian Empire for North America, 7,156 to Argentina and 1,230 went to Palestine.⁸² Although the perception of this period varies depending on the emphasis of the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. Page 288.

scholars, the most significant direction of migration was obviously North America. Whether it was violence, limitations, or expectations that most contributed to this great migration cannot be definitively determined. Moreover, there is a group of historians that have suggested that there were several other factors that encouraged this departure to begin. Brinkmann has placed his emphasis on the socio-political crisis, lack of opportunities, and the continuous escalation of anti-Jewish violence.⁸³ In contrast to this, Gur Alroey argues “that the mass Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe was not a flight from Imperial Russia or the result of panic.”⁸⁴ No doubt these conditions were a powerful factor, but Alroey’s argument suggests that this movement was probably influenced as “a reasoned process, beginning with a limited number of pioneer emigrants looking for better economic opportunities during the 1870s.”⁸⁵ Alroey’s research appears to downplay the troublesome events as motivators and emphasizes the desire to find work and live in freedom as the motivating factors. Jews were looking to find an opportunity to live and flourish. Even though it may have been difficult to get to America, it didn’t seem to matter that “American Jewry proposed limits on the number of Jewish immigrants and devised schemes to control the destinies of the new arrivals,” wrote Esther L.

⁸² Alroey, Gur. *Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 212.

⁸³ Brinkmann, Tobias. *Between Vision and Reality: Reassessing Jewish Agricultural Colony Projects in Nineteenth Century America*. *Jewish History*, Volume 21, 2007. Page 313.

⁸⁴ Alroey, Gur. *Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 31

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Panitz.⁸⁶ Perhaps the main factor was realizing that finding a job in North America seemed more realistic than finding one in Eastern Europe regardless of the violence. Even the research of Shaul Stampfer and Joel Perlmann confirm that the pogroms were not the main reason for leaving Europe although it may have been a concern.⁸⁷

With a strong desire to improve their living conditions and escape continuous harassment, what started out as a small movement of Jews gradually began leaving Eastern Europe for a land where the “streets were paved with gold”. Scholarship about this period reveals that there were many variables that were at play, some of which Jews had become accustomed to, while others were more troublesome. At times, one or more factors stood out and could be said to have been key sources that inspired the movement. However, the indicator that appears to have had the most overwhelming impact was the perception that a new way of life was attainable. This idea that a whole new world existed along with many opportunities seemed to resonate within the collective psyche of this population. The dream was powerful enough and conditions in the East had deteriorated to such an extent, that this mythic perception was a powerful motivating factor. Nothing is written in stone as the single answer to the question that has been raised. One begins to realize that with an inquiry of this nature there is no single response.

⁸⁶ Panitz, Esther L. The Polarity of American Jewish Attitudes Toward Immigration (1870-1891) *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Volume 53:2, 1963. Page 105.

⁸⁷ Alroey, Gur. Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 38.

Chapter 2

The Dimensions of Philanthropy and Productivization

Charity and the care for one's neighbour are themes of significance within Judaism. Contained in an early source of Jewish law known as the Mishnah (3rd century C.E.), there is a tractate known as Aboth where it is written: "let thy house be open wide and let the needy be members of thy household."ⁱⁱ Clearly, this is a statement of concern that one share with those that are less fortunate "thy house" (a generalization for one's possessions), while expressing a genuine sense of obligation (open wide) to others. Later on in the same tractate, Simon the Just is quoted as saying, "by three things is the world sustained: by the law, by the Temple service, and the deeds of loving-kindness."⁸⁸ Here again, there is reference to care and concern for others as a priority expressed by engaging in deeds of loving-kindness. In the previous examples, each statement attempts to convey the idea of social responsibility and compassion for others, emphasizing the idea of charity as a major pillar of the Jewish tradition.

It is a sort of passion to be helpful to others that Ephraim Frisch refers to as that "special warmth and glow among the Jews".⁸⁹ He is talking about the existence of an innate compassion for others that is unique and within all members of the Hebrew faith. It remains important that anyone (Jew or Gentile) in need of social or economic assistance should be treated with respect and avoidance of any kind of humiliation. What took precedence was the welfare of others with dignity and respect, helping without condition or consequence.

⁸⁸ Danby, Herbert (Trans). *The Mishnah*. Oxford University Press, London, 1933. Page 446.

⁸⁹ Frisch, Ephraim. *An Historical Survey of Jewish Philanthropy*. Cooper Square Publishers, N.Y, 1969. Page 178

Philanthropy or organized community assistance for Jews, according to Derek Penslar, “has been characterized not only by exceeding compassion, generosity of spirit, and communal solidarity but also as a preventive, as opposed to a merely palliative approach, and a desire to foster the economic independence of the poor”.⁹⁰ In this context, Penslar describes a form of community charity that goes beyond just taking care of a situation, rather it serves as a means to avoid its reoccurrence in the future. Jewish philanthropy, which is a more organized form of charity in action, is described by Ephraim Frisch as, “the duty of the community in its organized capacity to provide for the poor to the point of sufficiency if and when relief from private [individuals] fall short.”⁹¹ Charity then becomes a community responsibility with a goal to build on what could be provided. In other words, whether a person is given tools, food, money, or clothes, the goal is for the individual to take responsibility and move forward with what has been given. Even though direct assistance is provided, the direction is to avoid dependency and encourage a greater level of self-reliance.

On a basic level, the word “philanthropic” refers to benevolence, a concern for the welfare of the individual or a particular group leading to a reduction of suffering.⁹² In 1860, a Jewish philanthropic organization known as the Alliance Israelite Universelle began trying to eliminate social problems by creating improvement projects such as building schools for Jews. Jonathan Frankel writes that some within the Jewish Press referred to the creation of the Alliance as a

⁹⁰ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 90.

⁹¹ Frisch, Ephraim. *An Historical Survey Of Jewish Philanthropy*. Cooper Square Publishers, N.Y, 1969. Page 122.

⁹² “Philanthropic”, *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. 1994. Page 601.

“pivotal event” in history.⁹³ Finally, there was a global organization that would represent world Jewry. Faced with the increasing number of challenges and problems for Jews around the world, the organization exuberantly proclaimed that its aim was to unite “the Jews across the world... to create a link, a solidarity from country to country embracing in its vast network all that is Jewish.”⁹⁴ In addition to providing assistance to their less fortunate brethren, the members of the Alliance also became involved in defending Jews in extraordinary situations. From accusations of ritual murder to questions of national loyalty in places like Syria and France, the Alliance responded to the need for an international voice for the Jewish Diaspora.

With the increasing number of problematic events across Eastern Europe, the movement of Jewish refugees was emerging as a growing concern. Among Jewish philanthropic organizations just beginning to spread their wings in Europe and North America after 1870, there was little coordination but considerable goodwill. For Ephraim Frisch, “it was a time of keen responsiveness to fresh ideas and fresh methods of approach.”⁹⁵ In the United States, young organizations such as the National Conference of Jewish Social Services were making a considerable impact addressing Jewish vagrancy in America prior to 1900. As one of several groups emerging in the United States, this organization showed how to be successful in “reducing the number of permanent dependents and increasing the proportion of the self-

⁹³ Frankel, Jonathan. “Jewish Politics and the press: The Reception of the Alliance Israelite Universelle (1860)”. *Jewish History*, Volume 14, 2000. Page 32.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Frisch, Ephraim. *An Historical Survey Of Jewish Philanthropy*. Cooper Square Publishers, N.Y, 1969. Page 170.

supporting.”⁹⁶ Sticking to the theme of helping others help themselves, Jewish social assistance agencies provided work as opposed to just “throwing money at a problem”. Helping people better themselves was very effective in the long-term. By 1900, Jewish philanthropy in the west was beginning to take shape providing the services that newly arriving Jewish immigrants needed to rebuild their lives in a new country.

Celebrating the centennial of activities of the Baron de Hirsh Institute of Montreal in 1963, a special booklet was published highlighting the organization’s progress and impact on the developing Montreal Jewish community. Over the years, the organization provided support and shelter for the many of the immigrants arriving “until they could establish their own quarters or move elsewhere.”⁹⁷ As in other Jewish communities throughout North America, the Baron de Hirsh Institute situated in Montreal was one of the early organizations that extended its services outside of its home city to aid Jewish newcomers in the region. Whether in the form of supplying food, shelter, and vocational training, these services were considered standard activities for similar philanthropic groups functioning during this era. In Europe, Jewish philanthropic groups were functioning in a similar manner but with the added stress of attempting to move the influx of refugees arriving from Eastern Europe. In some regions of Europe like England, some Christian charities took the initiative to provide some basic services to the Jewish population. In most cases, this activity was seen more as an opportunity to

⁹⁶ Ibid. Page 175.

⁹⁷ Baron de Hirsch Institute, *Baron de Hirsch Institute Centennial 1863-1963*. Baron de Hirsch Institute, Montreal, 1963. Page 15.

convert the Jewish refugees while providing helpful services or items that were badly needed. Realizing this, Jewish organizations responded to this activity.

With a considerable number of Jewish refugees exiting Eastern Europe, the lack of an organized refugee effort created several problems. With many Jews in transit across Europe or held over in a particular region waiting to leave, the ranks of the poor and unskilled began increasing. With the situation becoming problematic in certain regions, there was growing concern that conditions would worsen for this underprivileged population. Aware of the events in Europe, deteriorating circumstances for refugees and related problems were of concern to the established Jewish communities in the West. Also concerned about these situations were some of the more affluent Jewish families in North America and Europe. Wealthy Jewish families like the Montefiores and the Rothschilds, became involved either working directly in some capacity or providing funding to a group or for a specific situation.

One particular member of a wealthy Jewish family who took action was Lionel Nathan Rothschild (d.1879). He was one of the first Jews elected to the British Parliament and was the driving force behind the enactment of the Jewish Disabilities Act of 1858 – a pioneer of Jewish Emancipation in England.⁹⁸ Another significant person was Claude Montefiore, who had been involved in Jewish education, politics and the Reform movement.⁹⁹ Both these English Jews represented the concerns of the wealthy Jewish families concerning the deteriorating situation in London. Some scholars suggest that this segment of Jewish society was more concerned as to

⁹⁸ Black, Eugene C. *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*. Oxford, U.K. Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988. Page 8.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Page 22.

how the Jewish refugees would disrupt their comfortable lifestyle. Unlike the poor Jewish refugees whose concern was simply to survive and find a solution to their situation, the wealthy members of Jewish society seem to have been more troubled when it came to the public image of Jews. Clearly concern about the problems related to the refugees was associated with a kind of backlash toward all Jews in the form of an increase in anti-Semitic behavior.

A Modern Global Jewish Philanthropy

Prior to the emergence of an international organization like the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the care of the less fortunate was usually the responsibility of the local Jewish community. The community would usually contribute by providing financial aid, food, clothing or lodging to an individual or a family. In his study of the Jewish community in Amsterdam, Yosef Kaplan describes how in 1642 the local Jewish Sephardic community organized an assistance program to aid the poor Ashkenazi Jews in Amsterdam.¹⁰⁰ Although this was done on a small scale and was limited to the local poor, the goal was to help individuals improve their poor living conditions which that was of concern to the Jewish sector and the Christian community. By supplying these less fortunate Jews with basic necessities and creating work projects, many were able to improve their lifestyle and financial situation. At the same time this kind of activity conveyed a more positive perception of Jews as a group helping others within their own community.

In some regions, Christian organizations also provided assistance to the poor of the Jewish community. Even though Christian churches conveyed their concern, their motives were often

¹⁰⁰ Michman, Jozeph. *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*: Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem, 1986, Volume 2 (1989) Page 29.

an agenda to convert the poor Jews. As I previously stated, the complications of non-Jewish assistance in England produced this kind of result as well with some Jews reluctantly accepting the proffered help. Therefore, one of the motivating factors for the Jewish community to become more proactive and help the less fortunate was to counter the Christian agenda of charity that ended up as an outlet for conversion. According to British social historian V.D. Lipman, the Jewish community in London, “normally did whatever they could to prevent Jews from having to rely on the Poor Law as it then was.”¹⁰¹ If the Jewish poor were sent to workhouses as required by the “Poor Law”, there was an effort to provide Jewish religious services for them. It was “in the spirit of Nineteenth-century philanthropy that the Jews should organize their own charitable relief societies” wrote V. I. Lipman.¹⁰² Consequently more Jewish organizations emerged and became aware of the increasing refugee problem in Europe as well as the Christian agenda. These factors pushed an increasing number of organizations to join in a loose affiliation for philanthropic assistance.

With respect to the international Jewish philanthropic scene evolving in that era, Lee Shai Weissbach mentions how Jewish charitable organizations in France “continued to promote acculturation and economic productiveness among the children of the poor.”¹⁰³ Whether or not the impact of French economist and social thinker François-Charles-Marie Fourier played a role is an important consideration. According to Fourier, “the economic activities of the Jews are all

¹⁰¹ Lipman, V.D. *A Century of Social Service 1859-1959 – The Jewish Board of Guardians*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1959. Page 12.

¹⁰² Ibid. Page 13.

¹⁰³ Weissbach, Lee Shai. “The Jewish Elite and the Children of the Poor Jewish Apprenticeship Programs in Nineteenth-Century France”. *American Jewish Studies Review*, Volume 12:1, 1987, Page 124.

of a parasitic and rapacious character. Their activity covers commerce, banking and usury, 'unproductive and deceitful' functions..."¹⁰⁴ Even though Fourier's perception of Jews appealed to a certain percentage of the population in France, his opinions would not receive "special attention were it not professed and diffused by a socialist group which preached a doctrine of harmony and universal unity," writes Edmund Silberner.¹⁰⁵

Fourier's anti-Jewish rants were continuously opposed by most French Jews and part of the Gentile community. As is evident in Franco-Jewish literature, there was a persistent concern for a program that would promote moral improvement within the Jewish lower class through training and apprenticeship.¹⁰⁶ Beyond refuting the doctrine of Fourier, this was an activity intended for the moral and character development of the young Jewish population in France. Central to this was a program for intensive occupational training that was designed to elevate the role of Jews in French society by becoming more productive. These programs were initiated "as instruments for reshaping the very character of poor Jewish youths." writes Lee Shai Weissbach.¹⁰⁷ The goal was to build good character early, which would lead to good discipline, respect, and loyalty toward the nation.

In France, agencies like the Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Sociétés de Patronage were created to go beyond the task of solving problems. Efforts were made to help French Jews

¹⁰⁴ Silberner, Edmund. "Charles Fourier on the Jewish Question". *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 8:4, Oct 1946. Page 249.

¹⁰⁵ Silberner, Edmund. The Attitude of The Fourierist School Towards The Jews. *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 9:4. October 1947. Page 362.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Weissbach, Lee Shai. "The Jewish Elite and the Children of the Poor Jewish Apprenticeship Programs in Nineteenth-Century France". *American Jewish Studies Review*, Volume 12:1, 1987, Page 127.

thrive and improve through education and vocational endeavours. The emergence of the Alliance was said to have derived from a heightened global sense of Jewish consciousness and for the emancipation and moral advancement of Jews throughout the world.¹⁰⁸ ⁱⁱⁱ The Sociétés de Patronage were founded by people from different religious denominations. From a Jewish perspective, the organization was created “for the express purpose of encouraging the children of the poor to undertake apprenticeships [and to constitute] intermediaries between poor Jewish families and skilled masters.”¹⁰⁹ Since these groups were more secular, their agenda did not include religious ideas in conjunction with occupational training. The Alliance’s activities were more internationally focused. Its ideology seems to have been influenced by French patrician philanthropy. It promoted productivity, thrift, discipline, cleanliness, with religious observance playing a minor role.¹¹⁰

Continuing with the theme of social improvement, the idea of universal progress was seen as a priority for a segment of the Jewish population in France. Those that promoted this agenda were concerned that the number of poor were increasing and could eventually become a more widespread problem if not addressed. When it came to addressing the issues of the day for Jews, the AIU maintained a unified strategy for both local and global undertakings. As a central theme, their objective was to contribute toward strengthening a resilient Jewish community that presented a unified approach on issues that confronted all Jews. With part of the AIU

¹⁰⁸ Black, Eugene C. *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*. Oxford, U.K. Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988. Page 44.

¹⁰⁹ Weissbach, Lee Shai. “The Jewish Elite and the Children of the Poor Jewish Apprenticeship Programs in Nineteenth-Century France”. *American Jewish Studies Review*, Volume 12:1, 1987, Page 125.

¹¹⁰ Weissbach, Lee Shai. “The Nature of Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century France and the Mentalité of the Jewish Elite”. *Jewish History*, Volume 8:1/2, 1994. Page 201.

membership reflecting what Michael Graetz refers to as “the periphery” of French society, their main concerns remained directed toward improving the image of Jews and Judaism in the eyes of the non-Jewish population.¹¹¹ If this perception could be changed and even improved, it would improve the position of the Jews in French society. Moreover, many members of AIU and Jews in general were reacting to the rise in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. For this reason, the emergence of other groups like the Jewish Colonization Association and the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden for example, also contributed to improving the conditions for Jewish people around the world.

While outlets for Jewish philanthropy were rising across Europe, more and more individuals were adding their voices to the discussion about social and political rights for Jews. Community leaders in Europe such as the Orthodox Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and a Reform Rabbi Ludwig Phillipson were two outspoken voices from different perspectives, yet concerned about the growing problems spreading throughout Eastern Europe. As representatives of Orthodox and Reform Jews, these men were concerned that political organizations like the AIU could create suspicion within the Gentile community that there was a secret Jewish agenda promoted by such groups. Rabbi Phillipson adopted a position that did not advocate action to stop hatred or fight the prejudice toward the Jews simply “because by so doing we would only reinforce it.”¹¹² Phillipson suggested the need to create more productive relationships with the Gentile world as opposed to continual confrontations. In a time when Jews were gaining rights and privileges across Europe, there were still many misperceptions that continued to circulate.

¹¹¹ Black, Eugene C. *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*. Oxford, U.K. Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988. Page 270.

¹¹² Frankel, Jonathan. “Jewish Politics and the press: The Reception of the Alliance Israelite Universelle (1860)”. *Jewish History*, Volume 14, 2000. Page 42.

For this reason, there were serious concerns about how the formation of a strong organization could be misinterpreted and send the wrong message to the Gentile world.

Ludwig Phillipson advised “not to stifle the hatred, for that is beyond us; nor to fight the prejudice... Our aim, rather, must be to avoid providing prejudice with nourishment. If we can manage that it will, with time, perish of itself.”¹¹³ Rabbi Phillipson was expressing his conviction that if Jews would not continue to fuel the fire of anti-Jewishness, negativity and the dislike of Jews would eventually dissipate. Like some of the people who supported the efforts of the AIU, Phillipson was concerned about improving conditions for Jewish people world-wide, which also included the idea of improving the “productivity of Jews”.¹¹⁴ Phillipson, according to Michael Graetz’s analysis, felt that improving the Jewish image would result from more charity, and refraining from public debate and confrontations that would incite Gentile mistrust or anger against the Jews.¹¹⁵ It was a path that many believed should be followed. Perhaps he was attempting to create a considerable distance from the older image of what a Jew once was, to what the new perception could be. Although this strategy may have been seen as realistic, it would prove quite difficult to get these changes off the ground.

In England during the late 1800s, the number of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe began increasing. With a growing ghetto population congested in London’s East End, efforts were undertaken to ameliorate the situation. By 1900, the Jewish population of the district had

¹¹³ Ibid. Page 42.

¹¹⁴ Graetz, Michael. *The Jews In Nineteenth-Century France: From the French Revolution to the Alliance Israelite Universelle*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1996. Page 252.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Page 257.

reached 125,000.¹¹⁶ The Anglo Jewish Association (AJA), which tried to help, was originally representative of only Orthodox Jews. Eventually it became more inclusive by inviting the participation of Reform Jews in 1886.¹¹⁷ Following these changes, many within the AJA felt that the way to improve the situation was by deemphasizing Jewish issues and redirecting the focus on problematic conditions within the secular world. As a means to avoid controversy, this was a strategy that would downplay excessive concerns facing the Jewish community and refocus on matters related to the British people. In his book on British Jewry, Eugene Black acknowledges this strategy as an effort to “deflect potential anti-Semitism”.¹¹⁸ It seemed that preoccupation with the Jewish issue was not conducive to healthy social relations.

As a philanthropic agency, the Anglo-Jewish Association entered the scene in 1870 to augment and extend some of the services already offered by other English organizations such as the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Board of Guardians. As the number of Jews entering England increased in the late 1880s, demands for housing, work, clothing and food became the main issues that faced the community. Proselytizing by Christian groups only increased the pressure on Jewish organizations to remain cognizant of their responsibilities. Even though social welfare was the main focus for the British social assistance programs, some philanthropic groups attempted to identify the immigrant population as British first and Jewish second. In doing this, the philanthropic activity would appear to be directed to aid fellow Britons rather than foreigners who were taking advantage of English good will.

¹¹⁶ Black, Eugene C. *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1920*. Oxford, U.K. Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1988. Page 35.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Page 38.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

As one of the leading community voices in England, the *Jewish Chronicle* newspaper conveyed the voices of a divided community. Even though the concerns of wealthy members of British Jewish society may have been focused on helping their brethren, there were other issues that needed to be addressed such as finances and certain political issues. At the same time, there was an uneasy sense that what was occurring within the refugee community should not be a reflection on the more affluent Jewish members of society. When it came to issues related to poverty and social concerns, the Chronicle conveyed an attitude that the poor were “responsible for their own plight and [this] turned destitution into a moral issue”.¹¹⁹ Once again, concern over the image of Jews became an important agenda due to the heavy influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. As the numbers increased, Jewish immigration was becoming more of a problem for Anglo-Jewry. As David Cesarani writes, there was a “conviction that the majority society would not, even could not, tolerate that which made immigrants Jews different.”¹²⁰ Similarity within a population created compassion and a desire to help bring about change. However, if a community was divided based on ethnicity or economic status, empathy for “the other” would be weakened or non-existent.

As social tension increased in London, the resident Jewish population was apprehensive about the growing anti-Jewish movement that would be fuelled by “archaic” Jewish behaviours. Many members of the established Jewish community of England felt that the quicker these habits were eliminated, the faster these people could be integrated into local society and blend

¹¹⁹ Cesarani, David. *The Jewish Chronicle & Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 1994. Page 35.

¹²⁰ Ibid. Page 25.

in with the general population. Associated with this position was the proviso that if this could not be achieved, these people should be returned from whence they came in Eastern Europe. For Asher Myers “the great task before the London Jewish community was to anglicise ‘the foreign content’ that has arrived in such numbers...”¹²¹ Philanthropy, according to Myers, should be used as a means to remould the immigrants and reconstruct a community: “we want the foreign poor, for example, to live like Englishmen.”¹²² This meant that the sooner the East European wave of Jews adopted the “British lifestyle”, the better.

With the numbers of Jewish immigrants increasing in many parts of Europe, there was little consensus on finding a solution to the growing problems facing the Jews departing Eastern Europe prior to 1900. Considered one of the leading organizations in matters of immigration, the Alliance began to send mixed signals to its fellow philanthropic organizations. At first, the Alliance attempted to convey the position that there was no urgent problem and that it wasn’t clear whether “the immigration of the Russian Jews should be directed to Western European countries or to America”.¹²³ In exploring the role of the Alliance during its formative years, Zosa Szajkowski wrote how the Alliance “pointed out the great possibilities for migration to the United States,” but when it came to the idea of supporting this venture, there was little if any movement in this direction early on.¹²⁴ Until such time as a more concrete plan could be formulated and in place, the Alliance supported a policy of discouraging Russian Jews from

¹²¹ Ibid. Page 76.

¹²² Ibid. Page 77.

¹²³ Szajkowski, Zosa. “How The Mass Migration To America Began”. *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 4:4, October 1942. Page 295.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

leaving Russia. Associated with this situation was that people within the Alliance worried about disrupting relations between France and Russia or offending the Tsarist regime. Furthermore, the majority of American Jewish organizations prior to 1890s were in general “opposed to such a migration and the Alliance was forced to accede”.¹²⁵ With little room to manoeuvre, the Alliance was walking a tightrope, attempting to balance what was socially necessary and the political requirements that did not rock the boat of those in power.

As the East European immigrants arrived in Europe and some trickled into America, a rise in the number of active relief organizations in North America can be noted. The Russian Relief Committee and the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society were created through the insistence of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. In addition to becoming one of many advocates for durable immigrant aid organizations in the West, the Russian Relief Committee and the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society advocated that only skilled workers and unmarried men should be sent to America to give them a better chance. When these restrictions were gradually enforced, there was a considerable opposition by hundreds of Jewish refugees waiting in places like Brody, Austria. No doubt there was a mounting consensus within the community of refugees opposed to leaving their families in an uncertain situation so they could begin work in America.

For the people managing the immigrant services, there was little choice. Even though the Alliance did in some cases try to redirect people back to their homeland, an unnamed Alliance representative commented that the refugees in Brody “would rather suffer here than return to their old homes.”¹²⁶ Since the process was slow, Alliance officials hoped that many would

¹²⁵ Ibid. Page 296.

¹²⁶ Ibid. Page 303.

return on their own if they waited long enough. Unfortunately this would not be the case and the refugee movement continued and people continued to flow into America.¹²⁷

At the Berlin Conference in October 1891, organized by a group of German Jews who were dissatisfied with the Paris group, the representative of the Alliance, Isidore Loeb, maintained that it was the position of his organization that migration to America should avoid “provoque[r] un mouvement d’émigration qui pourrait, par ses proportions, aboutir à une catastrophe.”¹²⁸ As a result, the Berlin Conference became an important starting point for promoting the migration of Russian Jews westward while at the same time making certain that “as few Jews as possible entered the German speaking countries”.¹²⁹ With anti-Semitism on the rise across Germany, the influx of more Jews, especially Russian refugees, would become a problematic condition. With America becoming the destination of choice, those involved in the relocation effort had to readjust and establish a clear channel of cooperation. As the numbers continued increasing, something had to be done to resolve the delays for those expecting to travel to North America. It was up to the Jewish agencies to establish a more efficient system to improve the transportation network and distribution once these refugees arrived. However, progress was slow.

Moving into the 1890s and onward, the agencies supported by Baron Maurice de Hirsch situated in Europe and North America began to assert a greater influence on the immigration movement. With a foundational philosophy based on Hirsch’s belief in farming as an activity to

¹²⁷ Ibid. Page 304.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Page 309.

¹²⁹ Ibid. Page 310.

promote social integration, these organizations had a unique perspective as to how and where to relocate a good proportion of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. Several scholars such as Simon Belkin (1966), Theodore Norman (1985) and Samuel Joseph (1978) described this period as a time when there was a great concern toward finding a suitable solution to the problem of mass migration from Eastern Europe. With many members of Jewish communities across North America assuming that this onslaught of refugees would be overwhelming and unmanageable, a growing sense of reluctance was becoming part of the North American Jewish mind set. Whether it was a concern for lack of work, a shortage of food, health issues or the lack of suitable accommodations, there didn't seem to be a sense that things would work out. Of course, many people were anxious about the proliferation of anti-Semitism if these conditions for the refugees would worsen. If the process of integration would become chaotic, the troublesome circumstances would contribute to what would become a hostile perception of the Jewish newcomers.

In the annual report of The Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society published in 1882, President H. S. Henry declared there was a strong desire to establish these immigrants in rural colonies.¹³⁰ Realizing the advantages and possible problems that might occur, American Jewish leaders gradually began to accept the idea that farming colonies could minimize the concerns and "could still play a role in siphoning off some of the access".¹³¹ With this idea spreading throughout Jewish organizations across North America, more and more groups began to

¹³⁰ Eisenberg, Ellen. Immigrant Origins and Sponsor Policies: Sources of Change in South Jersey Jewish Colonies. *Journal of American Ethnic History*. Volume 11:3. 1992. Page 32.

¹³¹ Ibid.

consider the farming option as something beyond a simple relocation program. With the creation and growth of a few agricultural settlements in parts of North and South America, a far greater number were able to envision their possibilities to address the influx of refugees from Europe. Even though problems existed, perhaps it was the potential of the situation that pointed to the possible benefits.

With the number of immigrants increasing daily, the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), with offices in Europe and North America, was becoming financially and operationally better prepared. Unlike charities that simply provided funds, the JCA operated similar to a business-operation. It was based on the guidelines set forth by the Baron de Hirsch in 1891. At that time, Hirsch described how he was “most decidedly against the old system of alms-giving, which only makes so many more beggars.”¹³² His approach was to adopt a strategy for providing loans for projects with an appropriate plan in order to avoid contributing to projects with little chance of success. He envisioned a model of philanthropy in which the task was to help human beings capable of working actively achieve their goals instead of becoming paupers.¹³³ It was a philosophy with the goal of encouraging people to become effective and important contributors to the greater society. At the start, JCA provided small loans that were made to an American group and a small Canadian charity in Montreal, which began as the “Young Men’s Hebrew Benevolent Society”. Through these early philanthropic efforts, going as far back as 1863, the program of the Baron de Hirsch was under way in North and South America by 1890.

¹³² Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund – The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant* Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 275.

¹³³ Ibid. Page 276

Hirsch's style of philanthropy suggested that the goal was more than simply to give money, but rather provide as much support as the immigrants needed. Perhaps this way of doing things was adopted because of the Baron's background in business that obviously influenced his approach. It was a model that would serve as a guideline for other groups to consider, if not follow. At the same time, it was a different form of Jewish philanthropy, divergent from the earlier model of continuous intervention. In this sense, Hirsch believed his strategy would "reawaken in the race [Jews] this capacity and love for agriculture."¹³⁴ At the same time, it was a way of starting to think more along the lines of social planning that preferred "to concentrate its efforts on the creation of a new way of life suited to the more adaptable human potential among the needy".¹³⁵ In this way, standards for success were measured on what could be attained reasonably, rather than having goals that were not achievable; to grasp what one could attain, as opposed to working toward an impossible dream.

This social planning and Hirsch's new philanthropic movement were a "gigantic experiment in social welfare," wrote Edgardo E. Zablotsky.¹³⁶ Motivated by his concern for the Eastern European Jews, Hirsch believed that he was helping "Russian Jews by providing them with the opportunity to become self reliant through productive work."¹³⁷ Once again, the ideas of

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Kellner, Jacob. *Philanthropy and Social Planning in Jewish Society: 1842-1882*. Ph.D. Thesis. Hebrew University, Israel. April 1973. Page 22.

¹³⁶ Zablotsky, Edgardo E. *Philanthropy vs. Unproductive Charity – The Case of Baron Maurice de Hirsch*. May, 2004. Electronic Paper - <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1013671> Page 2.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Page 6.

becoming productive and contributing to a community were powerful motivational factors that others at the time supported. Since there was a need for a solution to the increasing numbers of refugees, these farming projects were based on creating opportunities, while at the same time emphasizing the productive nature of immigrants

Theodore Norman states that the “so-called productivization movement” of the 19th century influenced the Baron de Hirsch’s philosophy and compelled him to follow this strategy.¹³⁸ In his book on the Jewish Colonization Association, Norman reflects on Hirsch’s thinking as a kind of defensive attitude that he hoped would contribute to the decline or even the elimination of anti-Semitism, “if the Jews were to become engaged in manual labour... instead of being traders or money lenders...”¹³⁹ Not surprisingly this was a popular attitude for many Jews at a time when incidents and rhetoric influenced by anti-Semitism were spreading globally. There was a growing belief within several philanthropic organizations that agriculture was a form of labour that would convey a different perception of Jews. . Following in this line of thinking, the goal was to replace the old perception of Jews with a new image of people who were hard workers and community builders. It was hoped that this would reduce the anti-Jewish mythic perception of European Jews as vagrants and candidates for social assistance. .

As the number of immigrants arriving in North America increased after 1900, it seemed that perhaps farming was the right occupation to transform the image of Jews as poor and unskilled labourers. As one of the early promoters of Jewish settlements in North America, the one-time

¹³⁸ Norman, Theodore. *An Outstretched Arm – A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, England. 1985. Page 2.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

immigrant Michael Heilprin commented, more Jewish institutions should be founded on the principle of “aiding those who aid themselves in promoting and rewarding independent efforts and successful energy – and not by gifts and distinctions, but by affording means for enlarging the scope of honorable efforts.”¹⁴⁰ (Pollack, p.216) Heilprin’s comments echoed a few voices of people in Europe like Rabbi Phillipson mentioned earlier in this chapter. Reflecting a trend that many believed was the best possible approach to transforming what a Jew had been and to what they could be like, it seemed more realistic than other schemes. In other words, simply providing charity / social assistance was not an effective means of building a new Jewish community in the West.

In discussing the thinking of the Baron de Hirsch, Edgardo Zablotsky wrote in 2004 that farming was a venture that could be “organized and managed as a business, in which the invested capital was to provide a profit or a renewable benefit” with all income intended to continue supporting further development “to the greatest possible number of immigrants”.^{iv} This was a model that required only the start up funds and that would eventually become self-renewing. Once in action, the system would provide for both continuance and additional growth. As government immigration policies in North America shifted from openness to increasing restrictions, philanthropic programs that would lead to greater productivity were considered more acceptable and beneficial. For this reason, all undertakings spearheaded by Jewish organizations had to be mindful in their policies of the manner in which immigrants were integrated into western society.

¹⁴⁰ Pollak, Gustav. Michael Heilprin And His Sons: A Bibliography (1912). Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1912. Page 216.

In dealing with the increasing numbers of immigrants and their placement options, more guidance was needed. Dr. Julius Goldman, who was part of the American Baron de Hirsch Fund, suggested that immigrants should be persuaded to leave the cities and decrease the overcrowded conditions in the so-called ghettos.¹⁴¹ This way of thinking led to more discussions concerning how certain manufacturing centres have to participate in creating opportunities to relocate families that would encourage future immigrants to follow them. The goal for Goldman and others at the American Baron de Hirsch Institute was to reduce the number of poor and destitute immigrants compressed into these regions, and thus help improve a deteriorating situation in cities like New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

When it came to the placement of refugees, the important work of The Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, founded in 1900, was at the forefront. According to a recent American scholar, one of its main goals was to assist and strengthen “farmer’s cooperatives, including creameries, storage facilities and factories...”¹⁴² What this meant was that the group would not only provide funds to help the Eastern European Jews, but to also aid farmers to purchase or further develop their own farms. However, the real problem was that many of these refugees did not have the capacity or the means to invest in farms. They didn’t have the knowledge and as such relied heavily on the assistance of Jewish agencies like the Jewish Agricultural & Industrial Aid society. Perhaps the Baron de Hirsch had the right intentions when

¹⁴¹ Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund – The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 43.

¹⁴² Brandes, Joseph. *Immigrants To Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey Since 1882*. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1971. Page 95.

he emphasized how important it was that refugees from East European should not only be removed from poverty, but needed to be better educated how to be more productive members of society. For Jews who had endured the Russian system, training in agriculture, or any industry for that matter, was minimal. Thus their experiences with the Jewish Colonization Association provided a renewed sense of hope that would not just improve their demeanour, but also inspire future aspirations and the reality of success.

For many centuries, the issue with respect to Jews in agriculture was not whether they could or could not farm, but rather that they were not permitted to own land in many regions, i.e. in the Russian Empire. Reading John D. Klier's discourse on Russian history reminds us that "while the Russian government relentlessly pursued schemes for Jewish agriculture colonization, it rejected the efforts of individual wealthy Jews to purchase land."¹⁴³ In Russia as elsewhere, the logic was clearly based on the idea that if Jews would buy land that Christians would settle on, this would create a troublesome situation. In this scenario, the ownership of the land would mean that "Jews would then own Christian souls, a state of affairs which could not be accepted by a Christian state with an established church."¹⁴⁴ As a consequence, many in the Gentile world believed that Jews were lazy and avoided anything associated with hard work at all cost. For the Baron de Hirsch and others, if there was to be any change in the role for Jews in either Western or European society to deter anti-Semitism, then perhaps farming was the answer. Intrinsically, farming was a way of turning a destructive perception of Jews on its head. At the

¹⁴³ Klier, John Doyle. *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge / New York, 1995. Page 30.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

same time, this was an opportunity to see Jews in a different light and explore new possibilities for the future. In this sense, emphasizing the idea that Jews were productive should lead to the creation of a modern “movement” of Jews that was active and engaging.

When Jewish farming settlements were beginning to be considered an option for East European refugees, only relatively few immigrants made their way to the scattered number of settlements in Canada and the United States., With the increasing acceptability of Jewish farming settlements as possible options of placement, some if not all, Jewish philanthropic agencies were slowly beginning to envision their potential. In North America and Europe, it was hoped that farming would convey the image of the Jewish person as an engaging, fearless, and hard working pioneer. As for the consequences of the increasing rhetoric of anti-Semitism and its negative perception of Jews, it was understood that the image of the Jewish farmer would take some time to become influential. However, in the words of the Baron du Hirsch, eventually “the poor Jew, who until now has been hated as an outcast, will win for himself peace and independence, love for the ground he tills and for freedom; and he will become a patriotic citizen of his new home.”¹⁴⁵ Hirsch was confident that the Jewish farmers would appear as engaged and bold in their attempts to avoid becoming social dependants, while they worked and developed the frontier. Changing the image of what some anti-Semites attempted to present as a social problem, Jews as vital pioneers would be seen as courageous people venturing forth, either alone or with their family, to try their hand at settling a land where there were few, if any people.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Page 276.

With a minimum number of options to develop vocational options for immigrants to North America, many early settlers chose to head west. Since most of the western regions were unsettled and required development, these newcomers were looked upon as exhibiting qualities of brave and adventurous people. The idea of Jews as pioneers had currency in the sense that, if used appropriately, it might influence how Jews and the influx of immigrants could contribute to a positive narrative. In the case of the Jewish agencies attempting to deal with the influx of thousands of untrained Jews, the idea of creating farming settlements could be promoted to the advantage of these organizations and the people they were helping. Taking a negative situation and turning it into something positive certainly would have appeared to have considerable benefits for the many refugees arriving in North American during that time.

Chapter 3

An Early Expression of Productivization: Jewish farming Settlements

Productivization through farming was on the agenda of several Jewish charities in Europe and New York during the 1880s. Early on, members of the Central Committee of what eventually became the Baron de Hirsch Fund in New York were preparing for what was anticipated as a considerable influx of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. At the top of the list of placement options, these Jewish philanthropic groups believed that the placement of refugees on farms would address a number of significant issues of concern. In the words of the biographer of the Baron de Hirsch, Samuel Joseph, in “the creation of Jewish farmers, particularly through the organization of agricultural settlements, was to be found the solution of most of the problems of the new immigrants...”.¹⁴⁶ Farming provided work, a place to live, and some of the basic necessities of life. Most importantly, it made Jews look “productive” a perception of Jews that was considered important to the people organizing this integration process. Expanding on this theme, Theodore Norman wrote that “intellectual apostles of productivizing Jews, of which the Baron was one,” were confident that if these immigrants could be transformed into productive workers, then perhaps farming would diminish the growth of anti-Semitism.¹⁴⁷ At the onset, the productivization of immigrants was an unofficial policy suggested by people like Michael Heilprin and the Baron de Hirsch.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund: The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 32.

¹⁴⁷ Norman, Theodore. *An Outstretched Arm: A History of the Jewish Colonization Association*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, England. 1985. Page 38.

This way of thinking originated for several reasons, including a response to the vast numbers of refugees arriving, the general perception of Jews and a concern for the proliferation of anti-Semitism. This chapter will deal with the question to what extent did productivization contribute to the creation of the Jewish farmer?

Although this was not a new idea, the placement of Jews on farming colonies seemed like a reasonable solution considering the concerns for the placement of refugees headed for North America. Since this would significantly influence the role of many immigrant Jews in North America, it would also alter the way the public would see all Jews. For Jews already living in North American society, it was hoped that these refugees would be portrayed as hard workers active in the struggle to build a successful community. Looking back at this period, Dekel-Chen refers to agrarianization as a strategy that was believed to contribute to character development and that “would repair most of the ills that plagued the Jews of Eastern Europe.”¹⁴⁸ From today’s perspective, agriculture was an activity that could serve as an effective “demonstration of the desire and capacity of the Russian Jew to till the soil and earn his living by the sweat of his brow, in the spirit of the early pioneers.”¹⁴⁹ In other words, for Dekel-Chen Jewish immigrants would become more than just immigrants requiring assistance, but a model for what was necessary to contribute to a developing society. In this respect, the farming colonies were promoted as the best option for some Jewish immigrants, even those without experience. This served as a counter-argument to the propaganda of those spreading anti-Semitic ideas that

¹⁴⁸ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. “JCA-ORT-JAS-JDC: One Big Agrarianizing family”. *Jewish History*, 2007, 21, Page 265.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund: The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 48.

Jews were useless and unproductive. Choosing this option may have diffused the argument and at the same time was helpful in providing opportunities for the Jewish refugees.

Looking more closely at the history of Jewish farming, it is my contention that the farming colonies were something more than a simple placement opportunity for East European immigrants. In one capacity, the farming settlements served to divert the flow of immigrants away from the overcrowded cities where they would be a drain on public services. At the time, the formation of farming settlements was supported by the Jewish Colonization Association and “provided many immigrants who arrived in Canada with a profitable occupation of their own choice.”¹⁵⁰ It is also important to remember that even if certain early agricultural colonies did not take off as great successes, the time during which these immigrants were involved in this process extended the integration network. That means the placement of refugees on farms also provided a sense of hope that something was being done for these newcomers to North America; people weren’t left to find work on their own.

Choosing the farming option meant that some of the pressure would be relieved from places like New York City. Although more and more refugees continued to arrive, farming colonies opened new doors to other parts of North America for settlement purposes. In an article published in *The Jewish Times* of Montreal in 1909, Maxwell Goldstein wrote that one of the major issues “facing Canadian Jewry was the difficulty posed by the influx of foreign Jews who formed ghettos and fostered prejudice among French Canadians.”¹⁵¹ For Goldstein, if Jewish

¹⁵⁰ Belkin, Simon. *Through Narrow Gates*. The Eagle Publishing Co., Montreal, 1966. Page 85.

¹⁵¹ Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 138.

refugees were not placed into regions where they could become part of the workforce, this would lead to a sense of resentment by the locals who were themselves concerned about finding work. In an attempt to counter the destructive effects of intensive Jewish immigration, the manner that these refugees were placed required sensitivity and foresight. Problematic conditions would reflect on the group as a whole and undoubtedly influence the perception of all Jews.

In 1888, a letter written to Oscar S. Straus, the first Jewish Cabinet Secretary in the Government of the United States, from social activist and writer Michael Heilprin suggested that “the prejudice and fear (of the stream of immigration) are both exaggerated.”¹⁵² Heilprin was attempting to dismiss reports that these Jewish immigrants were going to be a problem for the United States. As an immigrant to America, Heilprin argued that the United States could harbour all the 7 or 8 million Jews in the world, and absorb them all in a harmless way. Associated with the Montefiore Agricultural Society, Heilprin was confident that the agricultural option was the best alternative for Russian Jews waiting to come to America. Heilprin highlighted that it is especially the Russian segment of Jewish immigration that contain many who would benefit from agricultural colonies.¹⁵³ No doubt this was a reference to the fact that some of the Jews from the Pale region had some experience with farming.

Through productivization efforts in agriculture, many believed that this would lead the Jewish refugees back to the glorious biblical past leading to a resolution of the troubles of

¹⁵² Pollak, Gustav. *Michael Heilprin and His Sons: A Bibliography* (1912). Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1912. Page 215.

¹⁵³ Ibid. Page 217.

settlement. For Jewish refugees relocated in Argentina, the early efforts of Baron de Hirsch and his organization began from the premise that this was a land where agriculture could flourish, once minor obstacles were resolved. The Baron “envisaged a scheme in which the Jews leaving Russia would settle in several different countries and become assimilated, full-fledged members of that particular society.”¹⁵⁴ In South America, although farming proved to be a great challenge, success was possible. Consideration for troublesome issues such as the distance from the main population centres, undeveloped land, climate problems, and naive management, could be resolved. With the increasing number of Jewish immigrants after 1900, farming colonies in Argentina began to proliferate and overcome the early problematic conditions. Although considerable time was needed to achieve success in regions like Argentina, the Jewish Colonization Association continued to maintain support for these groups through the early years. In South America, it seemed that there was more at stake in these farming settlements than good farming. Hirsch believed that this region would “permit the establishment of a sort of autonomous Jewish state where our coreligionist would be protected from anti-Semitic attacks once and for all.”¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, there would be considerable investment by the JCA in Argentina, if the Jewish population increased considerably. In hindsight, the task was to avoid creating problems and confrontation, while supporting development.

Working to create a successful integration went hand in hand with the desire to improve the perception of Jews in Argentina and other regions. Clearly this was not a top secret program. It

¹⁵⁴ Avni Haim. *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1991. Page 35.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

recognized that the image of Jews around 1900 was comprised of myths and misinformation. In addition to aiding farmers to deal with the daily issues, JCA tried to avoid incidents that would fuel anti-Semitic rhetoric. This meant that on occasion, Jewish immigrants might be placed in a certain sector to minimize any confrontational situations. Relocating Jews in this manner illustrates the limits that Jewish farmers would encounter as opposed to other immigrants or local farmers familiar with the land, weather and economy. Another issue regarding the local environment, pointed out by Haim Avni was how “mass migration [to Argentina] became an increasingly sensitive issue, and the attitude toward the Jewish immigration was no different.”¹⁵⁶ It seems that many Argentineans were fearful “that the Jews would create a separate enclave in the Argentine Republic....”.¹⁵⁷ Although the environment in Argentina was harsh and troublesome, it was a place that could build character and no doubt change the perception of those who made the attempt.

Throughout the 1890s there are many examples of both successful and unsuccessful Jewish farming settlements in Argentina, the United States and Canada. Even though this movement was just beginning, the Jewish Colonization Association and the Baron de Hirsch maintained that if farmers were going to succeed, then “Jewish life must be reconstituted in a revolutionary manner.”¹⁵⁸ Creating farming colonies was a direction Hirsch was convinced would achieve this. Like Theodore Herzl, the Baron de Hirsch emphasized that it was the very nature of society that

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Page 43.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 83.

had to change, “to be reconstructed to achieve normalization.”¹⁵⁹ According to Oscar Strauss, Hirsch was more hopeful about the Western hemisphere and what could be achieved. However, when it came to the Middle East he was very pessimistic and believed that eventually Palestine would fall into Russian hands. As a result of his belief, Hirsch favoured Argentina to begin his great social experiment in Jewish agriculture.¹⁶⁰ In other parts of the world, Hirsch’s organizations continued to aid farming settlements and Jewish immigrant movement, wrote Simon Belkin.¹⁶¹ Jewish farmers were good for the Jewish public image and “proved that Jews can be pioneers even if not motivated by national or religious ideals.”¹⁶² In other words, if Jews forgot about their idea of a homeland and their religious practices they could become more than an impoverished group requiring assistance. Jewish farmers could be seen as outgoing, bold and contributing to society as they struggled on the frontier that had become their world of the future. Reflecting on this, Brandes mentions how there were some in the American Jewish community worried about accepting the ghetto mentality. Many believed that agrarianism was to be the salvation of the Jewish people. In reference to their activities, Brandes wrote, “if one of their goals was to counteract anti-Semitism and to impress the gentile world in general, then indeed they met with a limited success.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Lee, Samuel J. *Moses of the New World: The Work of Baron de Hirsch*. Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1970. Page 226.

¹⁶¹ Belkin, Simon. *Through Narrow Gates*. The Eagle Publishing Co., Montreal, 1966. Page 85

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Brandes, Joseph. *Immigrants To Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey Since 1882*. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1971. Page 92.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, farming was not an easy task. Most farmers including the Jewish settlers did not have the proper equipment, the skills, or the knowledge to work the land efficiently. Regardless of the equipment and knowledge, agricultural work required young, strong and healthy males who could adjust to the conditions. Nevertheless, a farm could be set up where someone could manage the farm with assistance from his family. This meant that maintaining a small farm was possible, but was not easy. That world was described by Israel Hoffer, an early settler in Canada, who wrote, “we made butter and cheese and had (wild) duck eggs... made a sod house which caved in; then lived in a shack which had no roof.”¹⁶⁴ His description conveys an environment of harshness that was dealt with even during the most difficult times. Factors that contributed to a high probability of failure were more often the result of exceptional long-term environmental conditions and the absence of adequate supplies to respond to the situation.

In parts of Canada and the United States, the climate was dry and characterized by long and cold winters, followed by short, hot, and dry summers with considerable rainy periods in the Fall. In many instances, weather was given as the main reason for the failure of certain settlements. According to Katz and Lehr, there was “an absence of a deep ideological motivation behind Jewish agricultural settlements in Western Canada,”¹⁶⁵ unlike other settlements communities. This research points out that perhaps it was because the Jews were not unified by a political agenda or idealistic socialistic goals, but were rather simple people

¹⁶⁴ Belkin, Simon. *Through Narrow Gates*. The Eagle Publishing Co., Montreal, 1966. Page 81

¹⁶⁵ Katz, Yossi and Lehr, John C. *The Last Best West: Essays on the Historical Geography of the Canadian Prairies*. The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University Press, Jerusalem, 1999. Page 52.

trying to survive. This was in contrast to the agricultural communities in Israel that generally had more religious and secular ideologies underpinning them. The land of Israel thus represented a unique situation with respect to the creation of agricultural settlements. Acknowledging this, I believe that Jewish settlements in Israel cannot be compared to developments elsewhere.

Historically farming was a form of labour that required hard work, long hours, dedication and community contribution. The farmer was usually understood to be an important contributor to society. His status reflected qualities of physical endurance and relevance to the growth of the community. With this in mind, it is no wonder that the quest to establish Jewish agricultural projects went beyond the desire for work and economic benefits. To a large extent, though the philanthropic agencies were concerned about settling the refugees, the image of the farmer was significant. In other words, the Jewish farmer conveyed an image of a hard working, consistent, and dedicated individual. If Jews had the desire to change or enhance their public image, then involvement in agriculture provided the circumstances where this became possible. Even if success was limited and failure almost a guarantee, the result might just as well have been worthwhile.

The productivization of the Jewish immigrant during the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly through agriculture, served as a counter-balance to Jewish involvement with banking and finance. The latter were two sectors of society where the use of mind rather than muscle was often incorrectly perceived as non-productive and abusive in Europe's past according to Robert

Weinberg.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, the occupational profile of pre-1900 Jews was skewed at both extremes. Eli Lederhendler mentions that Jews were involved in the banking industry or belonged to a workforce of peddlers, shopkeepers, artisans and general labour.¹⁶⁷ For Lederhendler, “the Jewish population within east European society has always been a subject laden with considerable ideological and political freight.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, Jews had considerable baggage that extended back centuries for a number of social and economic reasons. Whether as bankers or paupers, the Jews throughout Europe were restricted in their roles within society.

With respect to this negative historical perception of Jews, one modern scholar described their life of poverty as the result of their “abnormal occupation profile... and that Jews engaged for the most part in work perceived as non-productive and exploited gentiles.”¹⁶⁹ In the 1800’s, when more and more Jewish people began arriving in the “New World” (North America), this perception of the Jews’ and their occupational profile carried forward from Europe.

As part of an effort to modernize Jews in the mid 1800’s, the Haskalah movement believed that “Jews needed to modernize their style of life and to absorb the new learning current

¹⁶⁶ Weinberg, Robert. Biology and the Jewish question after the revolution: one Soviet approach to the productivization of Jewish labour. *Jewish History* (2007), 21,

¹⁶⁷ Lederhendler, Eli. *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class*. Cambridge University Press, N.Y., 2009. Page 9

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Weinberg, Robert. “Biology and the Jewish question after the revolution: one Soviet approach to the productivization of Jewish labour”. *Jewish History* 21 (2007), Page 414.

outside the periphery of traditional Judaism.”¹⁷⁰ During this period, these ideas of change were influencing a growing number of Jews who envisioned a new, more modern Jew who was open to certain “modifications” in Jewish lifestyle and religious practices. Commenting on these changes, Dekel-Chen remarked that the “Maskilim” also envisioned a “return to productive work, whether in the trades or on the land would strengthen the bodies, minds, and spirits of European Jews...”¹⁷¹ A long history of living apart from the Gentile world and religious limitations added to the perception of Jews as unproductive and unwilling to join with their neighbours. For Dekel-Chen this state of affairs had forced “East European Jews into a state of economic and moral decay.”¹⁷² Since the majority of Jews across Russia were poor, unskilled, and had only few, if any opportunities to interact with local Russians, modifications to their lifestyle seemed hopeless. With the growing interest and possibilities emerging in the field of agriculture, both Jews and non-Jews “envisioned agriculture as the solution to most of the world’s problems.”¹⁷³

Around this same period, Jewish philanthropic organizations began advocating for agrarianization based on the belief that this approach could resolve troublesome economic and political issues.¹⁷⁴ For organizations such as JCA the task was to support a new direction that

¹⁷⁰ Seltzer, Robert M. *Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History*. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, 1980. Page 567.

¹⁷¹ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. “JCA-ORT-JAS-JDC: One Big Agrarianizing family”. *Jewish History* 21 2007, Page 265.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Page 267.

could hopefully reverse Jewish poverty and political victimization, while improving the character and image of Jews who were opting to settle in farming colonies. In line with this thinking, it was believed that the positive benefits “could spill over, perhaps over the longer term, onto much of the Jewish people.”¹⁷⁵ Looking back at this era, Dekel-Chen suggests that several philanthropic organizations both in Europe and North America were confident that training a good proportion of the refugees had many advantages on different levels. Besides the benefits of providing work and economic gain, there was a genuine belief that following this path would influence how society at large would perceive the Jewish people. When the first Jewish farmers started out in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, it was reported that their presence “evoked considerable curiosity in the district.”¹⁷⁵ Farming in a territory that was primitive and dangerous could possibly elevate the perception of the Jew as a labourer. Perhaps some hoped that it would also add respect and even admiration for anyone who would risk his life and family to venture out into the great wilderness. In a reversal of the stereotypical role for Jewish immigrants, they would be the very first to make a contribution to the historical development of Canadian agriculture.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, leaders of an organization such as the Jewish Agricultural Society demonstrated “how a small elite group of community leaders used agrarianization to transform recently arrived “luftmenschen” from Eastern European into productive American citizens.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Leonoff, Cyril E. *Pioneers, Ploughs, and Prayers: The Jewish Farmers of Western Canada*. The Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1982. Page 3.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Page 12.

¹⁷⁷ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. JCA-ORT-JAS-JDC: One Big Agrarianizing family. *Jewish History*, 2007, 21, Page 269.

The perception of Jews as farmers was something uncommon at first to the general population in North America in the 18th and 19th centuries. Louis Rosenberg confirms this idea later on in the 1930s when he writes, in hindsight, that there was a general belief found in most urban centres of Canada, “that there is no such thing as a Jewish farmer.”¹⁷⁸ Even today, the awareness of the history of Jewish farmers is limited, due to the priority of other historical ideas and movements. Rosenberg attributed this lack of perception of Jews as farmers mostly to the ignorance and prejudice of the general population. Even so, Rosenberg does mention that there were many non-Jews who had heard about, worked with, or had known a Jewish farmer, and could attest to their existence and their contributions to agriculture in both Canada and the United States.

The productivization of Jewish farmers in some US and Canadian newspapers

On November 2, 1902, the newspaper *The Brooklyn Eagle* published a headline; “Great Progress of Jews in The United States”. The article comments on how the Jewish community in the United States “will be, in the near future, the very centre and focus of Jewish religious activity...” Beside suggesting that many Jewish immigrants have successfully found work and began to build a new life, the article highlights a few accomplishments and the notion that the concentration of Jews in the region could eventually elevate the area into an important global Jewish centre. Organizations like the Jewish Colonization Association, “contributed even more to the cause of Jewish agrarianization by initiating large-scale settlement projects...(and) it

¹⁷⁸ Rosenberg, Louis. *Canada's Jews: A social and economic study of Jews in Canada in the 1930s*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, Qc. 1993. Page 217.

forged the contours of an image of a “new” Jew working the land.”¹⁷⁹ Although this undertaking was the result of immigrant placement efforts, the people behind these farming settlements realized that it was equally important to remain concerned about the perception of Jews if they were to avoid any increase of anti-Semitism.

Returning to the great concern for the image of these immigrants and the relationship to other Jews in America, I looked for a way to ascertain how these Jewish farmers were portrayed in public. Although this is a difficult task, a preliminary survey on how Jewish farmers were portrayed in the media could provide the necessary data to confirm or reject this assumption. Working from this premise, I looked at four newspapers that were publishing from the 1880s to the 1920s. In Canada, I chose the *Toronto Star* and the *Manitoba Free Press* as references. For the United States, I looked at the *New York Times* and *The Brooklyn Eagle*, with the *Times* standing out as the paper with a great deal of content on Jewish farmers. It was from these newspapers, that it is reasonable to assume that a portrait of the public image of these immigrant Jews as farmers would be presented.

Looking at these publications, I began by attempting to gauge whether most articles related to Jews people conveyed a positive or negative perception of Jewish immigrants. Overall, most of the newspapers covered issues such as general social problems, stories about limited rights, Zionism and persecutions in Eastern Europe. Other minor themes ranged from Jewish customs, religious practices, events, and unique situations involving Jewish people. When it came to the

¹⁷⁹ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan and Bartal, Israel. “Jewish Agrarianization”. *Jewish History* 21 2007,. Page 240.

subject of Jewish farmers, the tone of many articles conveyed the achievements of Jews as productive workers.

In the *Toronto Star*, I found only a few articles related to Jewish farmers published after 1900. The first reference occurred in 1902 with an article about the struggles of Baron de Hirsch's organization in Eastern Europe. The article described the problems of Jewish refugees trying to leave Eastern Europe and how these Jewish refugees were flooding into England. (Oct 18,1902). The articles that followed until 1906, described developments in Zionism and more specific activities related to the quest to create a Jewish homeland. It wasn't until February 1906 that we begin to find more articles on Jewish farming and its role for new immigrants.

In editions of *The Star* that followed, there were a number of short articles announcing the influx of small groups of immigrants heading out west. Though not many details are given, there is a suggestion that this was a growing phenomenon in the west. Another interesting story was published in the paper of February 26, 1910, indicating how the Jewish immigrants arriving were seen in a positive light. Titled, "Many New Jews - Thinkers and Idealists", this article began with a reference to a Jewish financier who had arrived in Canada prepared to open a business and create jobs. The article goes on to state that the Jews arriving "have been coming in such numbers lately, are of another type... more concerned with the things of mind and less of profit."¹⁸⁰ Was this a reference to a new kind of immigrant arriving in Canada, or an intentional statement about what the writer wanted to convey about the Jews arriving? Later in the same article, the writer comments how "these Jews are not the same.... as the Americans have been used to... the Jews we have known were zealous for material things, eminently

¹⁸⁰ *Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ontario. February 26, 1910.

practical, getters-ahead.”¹⁸¹ In a few words, the reader is given a picture how the new immigrants Jews had changed or were different. As far as the refugees arriving, “they are intelligent, active, thoughtful, and their development is going to be worth watching.”¹⁸² Overall, what the article suggests is how there were different perceptions of Jews and the continuing influence of negative stereotypes. In the future, all articles appearing in this paper, whether on Jews, new immigrants or Jewish farmers, probably did contribute to introducing the new immigrants to Canadians. If anything stood out, the newspaper articles about events in Eastern Europe may have helped to create a sense of sympathy for Jews trying to escape the persecutions and injustices.

As another source for the Canadian perception of Jewish farmers, the *Manitoba Daily Free Press* (later became the *Winnipeg Free Press*) is a rich resource. With the arrival of Jewish settlers in Winnipeg, some stayed in the city while others moved on to other parts of the western frontier. One of the first articles I found appeared in the newspaper on June 12th, 1886. In that report, two men travelled to the Jewish settlement at Moosomin and did not find it in a “flourishing condition”.¹⁸³ The article may have given the reader an impression that the undertaking would not work out. The article reveals there was a shortage of equipment, funds and especially food and all this contributed to hardships and the settlement’s early demise. Even if an appeal were made to the public to make donations to help this situation, there was

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ *Manitoba Daily*. Winnipeg, Manitoba. June 12, 1886.

little prospect for success.¹⁸⁴ Later that same year, another short article appears describing a different settlement of Jewish farmers who were “doing fairly well”.¹⁸⁵ The story provides little information to make an assessment in greater detail. In September, 1886, a letter to the editor provides a few more details and insight into the early perception of Jews in Canada’s west. According to the letter, a man whose name suggests he might possibly be Jewish describes the activities of another Winnipeg newspaper that he says took great pride in highlighting any time a Jewish person becomes involved in a wrong or has been in trouble. He concludes his letter by stating it’s “not a Christian thing to do”.¹⁸⁶ Reading the article may suggest that the other newspaper has adopted an intentionally negative view of Jews that is not conducive to good relations in a community of mixed ethnic groups. Furthermore, the author suggests that this is not a realistic picture of the Jewish community in Manitoba and something should be done to change this.

After 1902, we start to see more features on Jewish immigrant farmers with articles like; “Happy Jewish Farmers”. In that article, the writer states the area of Assiniboia in Manitoba was becoming a “prosperous district”.¹⁸⁷ Many fields were in “the planted highest state of cultivation” as animals grazed in the pastures.¹⁸⁸ Again making reference to the fact that this was a Saturday and Jews did not work writer comments on the tranquillity and peaceful nature of the area. It was a description of a serene farming scene and a expression of respectfulness

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. August 2, 1886.

¹⁸⁶ *Manitoba Free Press*, Winnipeg, Manitoba. September 10, 1886.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. June 14, 1902.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

for the Jewish tradition. It was a perfect promotional representation indicating a successful program for moving immigrants from Eastern Europe into farming settlements in North America. However, everything wasn't peaceful as the image portrayed. Later in September of 1902, the same newspaper published a story on how the public was concerned that Polish Jews are being unfairly assisted into Canada by the Baron de Hirsch organization. Did this reflect new problematic conditions with certain refugees? In any case, there is mention of a change in Canadian immigration strategy where the number of Jews coming into Canada is being strongly discouraged by immigration officers in Europe. Was this caused by concerns over overcrowding that was occurring in cities like Montreal? Whatever was behind this, it is the last sentence that causes the reader to be concerned. In the last lines of the article, the writer mentions that many undesirable Jewish immigrants made it into Canada. Although there are few detail that explain this statement, this assertion that there are many "undesirable" Jews somehow connects Jews with a negative association.¹⁸⁹ Even with the successful movement of immigrants onto farms, the association of undesirability with Jews probably had some impact.

In the years after 1902, the *Winnipeg Free Press* continued to publish stories related to the Jewish situation in Eastern Europe, the activities of the Zionists and a growing number of Jewish farmers in Western Canada. I have listed the stories not just about Jewish farmers, but concerning all activities involving the local Jewish community. My idea was to learn what was appearing in the newspapers about Jews and their role in the greater community. The underlying goal was to gauge how these reports conveyed information related to the image of Jews overall. Consider the article entitled "Jewish Colonization" of September 13, 1905. In this

¹⁸⁹ *Manitoban*. Winnipeg, Manitoba. September 18, 1902.

story, the author discusses the possible establishment of a Jewish state in British East Africa. Because of the growing concern for the “stream of Jewish immigrants” leaving Russia, the author of this article believed that the situation in Europe will eventually “aggravate congestion in some of the great cities where Jewish communities are already formed.”¹⁹⁰ Reading the article, I had a sense that there is a feeling of concern by Jews and non-Jews alike for the situation and for the increasing number of people leaving Eastern Europe. Furthermore, there was a suggestion that Jews take some kind of action and become more engaged publicly.

In 1906, another short feature titled “Jews and Gentiles” mentions the theme of an upcoming lecture in Winnipeg by the Honourable George R. Wendling of Illinois. Wendling was a lawyer and a well-known American politician. What was significant about this article stems from Wendling’s comment that, “the beliefs that the Jew is more dishonest than the gentile is one half nonsense and other half prejudice and falsehood.”¹⁹¹ Wendling’s position reflected his concern about anti-Jewish views in the greater community. Since a well-known American was lecturing on the subject of anti-Semitism, could the level of anti-Jewishness have been increasing or was this becoming a matter of concern because of the growing number of immigrants arriving daily?

In January 1907, there is another feature that conveys controversy between Jewish farmers (sometimes referred to as the Hebrew community) and the surrounding community. The incident took place in Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan. It was alleged in a regional newspaper that the Jewish farmers were keeping “stray cattle” on their farms. Denying the allegation, the

¹⁹⁰ *Winnipeg Free Press*, Winnipeg, Manitoba. September 13, 1905.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* October 24, 1906.

writer goes on to say that the “Hebrews as a class, worked hard for their living and it was false to say that they were undesirable citizens.”¹⁹² It would seem that this report by refuting the negative allegations against Jewish farmers emphasized the positive side. In this case, I would argue that this article was undertaken to illustrate a sense of responsibility and assertiveness by the “Hebrew community” in addressing a sensitive matter. At the same time, it reveals an attempt to defuse any incidents that could be used to stir up the local population against Jews. The debate over the question of desirable or undesirable citizens is answered by the generalization that Hebrews are “as a class” hardworking. Standing up to the accusations served to convey a better perception of Jewish farmers, though, once again, it must be noticed that references are made specifically to Jews as opposed to a dispute between farmers or neighbors. Why the emphasis on Jews?

Addressing the image of Jewish farmers is not always a clear cut matter. As mentioned early in this paper, it is not a straightforward issue as to how a story will be interpreted by a reader. I do not believe there was an official agenda on the part of the press to improve the Jewish image. However, I would suggest the possibility of Jewish involvement either directly or indirectly in how Jews were portrayed in public. In the first stage of this research, I could not directly find evidence that Jewish philanthropic organizations or any other related group for that matter made an extra effort to influence newspaper features about Jews or Jewish farms. However, there was considerable concern how Jews would be represented and to avoid incidents that would contribute to anti-Semitism. In following such a direction, certain

¹⁹² Ibid. January 1, 1907.

newspaper articles clearly reveal a pro-Jewish attitude and an emphasis on elevating the role of Jews. This is often found more in the *New York Times* which was owned by Jews.

Concluding my review of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, there was a feature in 1910 that covered a convention of Jewish farmers in the United States. With most of the story describing the event and the participants, the article does mention of the growth in the Jewish farming population and how many Jews have been leaving the city and heading for the country. The writer suggests that only good can come from the Jews “exerting the same industry and painstaking care that have made them successful as merchants.”¹⁹³ Was this a positive reflection or an anti-Semitic comment watered down? A couple of years later, the Jewish preference for crowded cities was addressed in a story on the Jewish Colonization Association in Canada. With the use of statistics from the 1911 Canadian census, the article reveals that there are 850 Jewish farming families consisting of 3,720 souls settling in groups across Canada.¹⁹⁴ The story goes on to describe the types of farmers including wheat growers, mixed farming and dairy producers found throughout the Dominion. The most interesting line in this report is the phrase – “the back to the land movement takes a decided hold on the race and is speeding so fast that in many instances the association has to discourage intending settlers from taking up farming.”¹⁹⁵ Is the writer attempting to convey a positive message about Jewish farmers? Or is farming a profession many are attempting to join with few opportunities for involvement? If this was the

¹⁹³ Ibid. December 12, 1910.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. November 23, 1912.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

situation in Canada, was the situation in the United States any different? Did their newspapers follow the same thinking?

Referring to the American perspective, I was fortunate to find a newspaper existing prior to and during the influx of refugees, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The stories carried in the *Eagle* were mostly related to immigrant life, and issues pertinent to the immigrants' adjustment to conditions in North America. Though there were many articles covering the subject of Jewish farmers, overall most articles about Jews were about events in Eastern Europe, Zionism and lifestyle issues in New York. These articles are helpful in the sense that it is possible to get an impression of how the early Jewish population was perceived and what their role was in the social environment during that time.

Articles available from *The Brooklyn Eagle* go back to the paper's origin in 1841. One early reference, dated April 13, 1843, addresses the onset of increasing immigration. In that feature, the writer covers the progress for the "protection of immigrants arriving at port". It seems that many newcomers were taken advantage of and had been falsely directed. This situation resulted in the involvement of Jewish organizations in New York with immigrants once they had arrived. News such as this related to the Jewish population appeared in a special section of the paper titled "Hebrew Notes". In this part of the paper, one finds news specifically related to local Jews and the global Jewish community. Another article published in the July 15th, 1900 edition discusses the achievements of Jewish colonization and the benefits that resulted from this endeavour. In Argentina, Jewish farmers had made considerable progress with their cultivation practices producing good crops and earnings that improved their lifestyle.

Continuing this theme on the success of Jewish farmers, there was another article six months later, titled “Early feature on Jews Attempts at Farming in America a Great Success.” In this article, the writer discusses the achievements of the Baron de Hirsch’s Agricultural & Industrial School at Woodbine, New Jersey and a recent award for its activities in training new immigrants.¹⁹⁶ Also worth mentioning is a reference to how this organization won and deserved a prize for its effective attempt “to solve the Jewish problem.”¹⁹⁷ This was without doubt a reference to the perception that Jews were a “problem” that was troublesome and long lasting. One month later, another article entitled, “Is America the Jews’ Promised Land?” conveyed a somewhat different message regarding the state of affairs for Jews in America. For readers of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, the article suggested that circumstances had suddenly turned around for the Jewish population. In this story, the writer makes reference to a “growing success” for Jews and that “they are likely to carry, or be carried by success beyond the present limits.”¹⁹⁸ In one article, Jews were seen as a problem; in another, they were suddenly becoming successful. Does this present a perception that was changing or a different writer expressing his/her view of Jewish world? Even though some believed that by this time many Jews would have been absorbed into the general population in such a way so as to “materially modify, if not practically eliminate, their distinctive character...,” this did not occur.¹⁹⁹ More so, there were thousands of Jews still living in poverty that had not made any progress. For the reader of the *Brooklyn Eagle*,

¹⁹⁶ *Brooklyn Eagle*. Brooklyn, New York. January 6, 1901.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. February 24, 1901.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

there is a somewhat confusing picture when it came to understanding the life and status of the immigrant Jews in America.

Another important newspaper, the *New York Times*, contained many references to Jewish people and Jewish farmers. As one of the largest newspapers in the United States, owned by a Jewish person, *The Times* was a national paper situated in New York City. Similar to the other newspapers I consulted for this study, there were the usual reports about the situation in Eastern Europe, Zionism, the settlements in Palestine, and the life and times of Jews in America. Many of the Jewish Philanthropic organizations were located in New York City, and New York was the home for many Jews in the United States. This was probably a factor that accounted for the newspaper's considerable content on the Jewish situation.

One regular feature I found in this paper was an article on the conference of the Federation of Jewish Farmers held annually in New York City. This meeting was an annual get together of several Jewish agricultural groups to explore issues related to progress, developments, and difficulties in agriculture. This recurring article was like a promotional feature highlighting the benefits of Jewish farmers and their accomplishments. It proclaimed the value of this group not as simple workers, but as a community that was a key to the progress of the United States for years to come. In the edition of March 6th, 1910, there is a summary of a report by the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society written to counter, "those who allege that the Jews, and more particularly the Jewish immigrants in the United States, object to the hard manual labour involved in agricultural pursuits."²⁰⁰ The report elucidates the successes of this organization and provides a more positive picture of the role of Jewish immigrants that were settling in America.

²⁰⁰ *New York Times*. New York, N.Y. March 6, 1910.

Furthermore, the article suggests that this information serves to redefine the image of many Jewish immigrants and depicted a more favourable illustration of their progress across the country. It could be said that the Jewish community was learning how to utilize the media to promote its agenda.

In March of 1912, a similar promotional story appears under the headline of, “Jews are moving on to the farm lands.” Once more the writer highlights the yearly report of the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society (JAIAS). The report reveals how many Jewish immigrants continued on to farms after they arrived in America. According to the JAIAS, the number of Jews interested in farming was increasing across the United States. More and more Jews were taking advantage of the organization’s help and financial programs available. The report also declares that the movement of Jewish immigrants to farms was spontaneous and that no propaganda was necessary. Since farming assistance programs were available to help individuals discover the benefits of farming, it is possible that this had an impact on the number of troublesome situations. In November 1913, there was a headline that read, “Jewish Farmers help themselves”. Emphasizing the positive direction of growth, this was another in a series of reports on Jewish farming and those associated with its developments. Alfred Jaretaki a Jewish lawyer in the early 1900’s, was quoted in the article as continuing to encourage the Jews to follow the direction of becoming farmers and to take this opportunity to prosper as many had done thus far. With ambition and the desire to succeed, hard work would result in many rewards.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Ibid. November 17, 1913.

Even though the number of Jewish farmers was growing in places like Minnesota and Florida, there was a shortage of actual farmers selling their produce in New York City. It seems that many farmers dedicated themselves to the actual farm rather than the selling of products to the public which was left in the hands of others. With large numbers of Jews farming, this unquestionably resulted in the comments by a representative of the Federation of Jewish Farmers in 1916, that it would, “only be a short time before we have in America not thousands, but tens of thousands of Jews who are farmers and tilling the soil.”²⁰²

These features on Jewish farmers were published on a yearly basis and the perception portrayed was a positive image of this industrious group. Of course, they did not represent all Jewish people in North America, but it was important nonetheless. Whether or not this was a reflection on all Jews, is something that is more difficult to assess.

The *New York Times* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* are two excellent resources for learning how Jewish farmers were seen by the public. While the other two newspapers had less relevant articles, they did provide important information enabling us get a glimpse of what others were learning about the roles of Jewish immigrants in North America. The articles revealed how Jews were engaged in farming and presented activities considered to be “productive”. These Jewish farmers were working to build and strengthen their own lives, while contributing to the country they now called home.

²⁰² Ibid. November 30, 1916.

Chapter 4

Rethinking the “Galveston Project” as an expression of productivization

After 1880, the flow of Jewish immigration to North America continued to increase – in 1881 the Jewish population in Montreal was about 950 and during the next decade increased to 2,473 people.²⁰³ According to Louis Rosenberg, the Jewish population in Canada in 1901 was 16,401. By the end of 1910 this number had surpassed 75,000.²⁰⁴ Based on information from the Canadian Jewish Congress, “between 1900 and 1920 the Jewish population of Canada increased by 110,845 - with 86,169 just through immigration alone.”²⁰⁵ In the United States, the Jewish population was estimated to have surpassed one million just after 1900.²⁰⁶ In *The American Jewish Year Book* for 1906-1907 disclosed that there were 1,418,013 immigrants arrived in the United States from 1881 until 1906 through the three eastern ports of New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia.²⁰⁷

As the number of Jewish immigrants increased, the usual entry ports on the east coast were starting to exceed the quantity of people that could be handled. As a consequence of this situation, a new option was needed to help with this growing problem and reduce the pressure

²⁰³ Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2008, Page 69.

²⁰⁴ Belkin, Simon. *Through Narrow Gates*. The Eagle Publishing Co., Montreal, 1966. Page 211.

²⁰⁵ Kage, Joseph. *With Faith and Thanksgiving: The Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration & Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada (1760-1960)* The Eagle Publishing Company, Montreal, 1962. Page 51.

²⁰⁶ Adler, Cyrus. “Assorted Statistics 1900-1901”. *The American Jewish Yearbook*, 1900-1901, Volume 2. The Jewish Publication Society of America. Philadelphia, PA. Page 40.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. Volume 8. Page 129.

on the existing processing stations. At the time, there was considerable concern that if the deteriorating conditions at these intake centres continued, the people arriving might be seen more as a problem than an advantage for the country. After 1904, discussion was underway to address this situation and find a solution that was acceptable. The Galveston Movement was an undertaking organized through the cooperation of a few Jewish philanthropic organizations in the United States and Europe. In essence this option to address the issue of overcrowding on the East coast which was designed selectively relocate and divert some of the Jewish refugees to a southern port situated on the Texas coast that was less active. Once the Galveston movement was set into motion to aid immigrants who wanted to settle in other regions of the United States, the number of Jewish refugees heading in this direction began to increase. Originally, the idea was to preselect this population based on criteria that would ensure quick and successful integration. To make certain that this would occur it was believed that jobs should be found in advance of their arrival in America. Many factors were considered so as to attract a population that was healthy and hardworking. The task was to select a population that was productive rather than an additional burden on the North American communities where they wanted to settle.

The logistics of the Galveston Movement

Situated in the Gulf of Mexico, Galveston was one of several possible entry ports to the United States. Selected because of its direct access to train routes toward the interior parts of the country, this coastal island served as part of a unique experiment between 1906 and 1914 when about 10,000 Jewish refugees arrived on its shore. As some Jews continued to arrive in

North America via the usual ports on the east coast, others were solicited by an association of organizations that believed their option was more effective than the mass confusion occurring at certain eastern ports. It was initiated by American philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff, a wealthy American Jewish banker who believed that there was a different way to handle the overcrowding on the east coast that would reduce the chaotic consequences in places like New York or Baltimore. Schiff was convinced, writes Bernard Marinbach, “that spreading Jewish²⁰⁸ immigrants throughout the West was crucial for the future well-being of American Jewry.” It was a time that Gur Alroey describes as the Jewish quiet revolution which would lead to radical change in the life styles of many Jews.²⁰⁹ While all this was happening, the discussion continued at a different level regarding the impending possibility of legislation that would set limits on immigration to the United States because of the related problems occurring.

Originating from the initial effort of Jacob H. Schiff, those responsible for the Galveston Movement hoped that greater control of the immigration process would lead to successful integration on the horizon. They took their lead from an America commissioner of Immigration, Franklin Pierce Sargent, who suggested to Schiff that emphasizing a new option and discouraging the continuation of the usual route of immigration processing would result in many benefits to the immigrant situation. Bernard Marinbach wrote that Sargent suggested “that the most effective way to accomplish this would be to divert immigration to U.S. ports on

²⁰⁸ Marinbach, Bernard. *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*. State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y. 1983. Page XIV

²⁰⁹ Alroey, Gur. “Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century”. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004). Page 130.

the Gulf of Mexico.”²¹⁰ Considering the merits of this suggestion, Schiff who was not in agreement with the Zionists’ efforts either in Africa or in Palestine felt this was the best option. He was more confident that the future for these new Jewish newcomers to America was to assimilate and spread out throughout the country. With many Jew settling in places like New York and Boston, there was a sense of apprehension what would happen if Jews would congregate in one or a selected few locations. Should this occur, both American Jews and Gentiles would ask questions about Jewish loyalty and whether their intention was to build a ghetto or maybe even their own homeland

As the situation in Eastern Europe began to worsen, Schiff made contact with Israel Zangwill who wanted to establish a Jewish territory anywhere in the world. Even though Zangwill eventually agreed to join forces with Schiff’s group, this radical change for Zangwill’s Jewish Territorial Organization had other motives. Some scholars suggest that Zangwill’s group considered this project a learning experience for a future where this knowledge would be useful. Even so, both Schiff and Zangwill knew that actions had to be taken as soon as possible or the events in Eastern Europe would lead to far more serious consequences. As Gur Alroey writes, “Their greatest fear (referring to Schiff and Zangwill) was that the socioeconomic situation in New York would increase anti-Semitism, that calls would be heard to close the gates of the United States to immigrants in general and Jews in particular...”²¹¹ Even though this was

²¹⁰ Marinbach, Bernard. *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West*. State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y. 1983. Page 9

²¹¹ Alroey, Gur. *Bread To Eat & Clothes To Wear: Letters from Jewish migrants in the early 20th Century*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2011. Page 22.

alluded to by several people working with the immigrant population during that era, it seemed that only a few realized how delicate the situation was becoming.

In 1906, Schiff brought together the efforts of the B'nai B'rith and the United Hebrew Charities of New York to create the Industrial Removal Office. With part of this operation headquartered in New York City, most of the ground work and planning would fall to the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau in Galveston. In Europe, the central information office known as the Jewish Emigration Society began in Kiev. Through this office, information was made available to many East European Jews who were interested in leaving for the United States. This organization was not a funding group but simply an information office set up to help the Jewish population considering immigrating. Even as an information central, this branch of the larger organization was looking for specific kind of refugees that the Galveston Movement thought could be helped by their organization and programs. Since there was a German shipping firm that would make the voyage to the southern United States, the German city of Bremen became the central departure port for Jewish refugees. As for the processing prior to leaving Europe, the guidance of the German philanthropic group Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden, became involved as an important unifying component in this multi-organizational network. With all partners clear as to their role in this affiliation, this new program to help East European Jews to a successful transition to America would become recognized as an effective means of aiding the increasing number of Jews trying to immigrate to America.

From the very beginning, these organizations established the guidelines for the type of people most likely to be successful in America. In order for people to be recognized as suited

for this program, two important criteria were highlighted. Simply finding people was not the problem and not the answer. The main criterion for the Galveston Movement, wrote Gur Alroey, was that the leaders wanted to “attract productive immigrants ...”²¹² This involved a desire to find men who were good workers, strong, and below the age of forty. Clearly these were men who had skills such as shoemakers, cabinet makers, painters, tailors, plumbers and carpenters – all represented the type of people that were need in a modern society. There was less demand for Hebrew teachers, religious slaughterers or people needed for religious services; these individuals were not sought out. According to the criteria set out by the Jewish Emigration Company in Kiev, immigrants were even advised that “economic conditions everywhere in the United States are such that strict Sabbath observance is exceedingly difficult, in many cases almost impossible.”²¹³ Though religious professionals were needed in some respect, the priority was given to labourers who could find work easily.

In 1906, the Galveston movement began to recruit individuals and organize ships for transportation. In this cooperative effort, certain guidelines had to be maintained to avoid an early failure. Thus the Industrial Removal Organization in conjunction with B’nai B’rith, were independently looking for placement opportunities to prepare for the future influx of refugees. Once these people arrived in Galveston, the processing was designed to move quickly and move immigrants on to their pre-established destination. In order for this to work, jobs were found in advance based on the individual’s skills and the type of work they could handle. It was essential

²¹² Alroey, Gur. “Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century”. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004) Page 137.

²¹³ Ibid. Page 134.

to the movement's policy and a condition worked out with the small Jewish community in Galveston, not to allow any immigrants to remain in the city. This was done to avoid recreating the situation that existed on the east coast. According to Bernard Marinbach, "out of the ten thousand immigrants handled during the course of the Galveston Movement, less than three hundred remained in Galveston...."²¹⁴ Related to this situation, if the work provided to the newcomers was unsatisfactory or didn't work out, then a secondary attempt would try to correct this situation. The Galveston Movement was carefully addressing both direct and indirect issues, realizing the great consequences at stake.

Another aspect associated with the success of the movement, was to send immigrants for training or retraining to improve their chances to get a well paying job. Concerned about effective placement and the related concerns, follow-up agents travelled to where the newcomers were located to verify how the transition was working out. Naomi Cohen describes this as part of Jacob Schiff's hands on policy and his position as a kind of "ethnic broker or one who tried to mediate the differences between the Jewish community and the host society."²¹⁵ Clearly, there was concern in the movement about the arrangements and that everything would work out well. Reports of this nature suggest that the actions taken became a reflection of the immigration process and clearly indicated that the people arriving should not possess troublesome qualities that could lead to social problems. Naomi Cohen said that this was an

²¹⁴ Marinbach, Bernard. *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y. 1983. Page 23.

²¹⁵ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 41.

approach that “sought to demonstrate the ongoing viability of free immigration.”²¹⁶ Even though some immigrants were told not to worry about the possibility of deportation, there was a percentage that could not adjust or wanted to return to Eastern Europe. Although there was a local suspicion that some Jews arriving in Galveston were not honest, the movement’s management maintained a smooth operating network to avoid controversy. Certain incidents “made the point that it was not true that the Jews look after their own unfortunates, since many of those Jewish immigrants were deported for having become public charge.”²¹⁷ It was important for the officials of the Galveston Movement that all was in order and followed the regulations established by the government of the United States. Thus Marinbach mentions the wide distribution of a Yiddish pamphlet by the Jewish Territorial Organization in Kiev, advising potential immigrants “how to dress, pack and otherwise prepare for the voyage to Galveston... it also contained useful instructions on behaviour...”²¹⁸

I would argue that the Galveston movement was a positive alternative to other placement methods on going on the east coast. If a list did exist highlighting the possible benefits of the movement during this period, two variables would stand out. The first would be the placement of newcomers in parts of America that needed people to develop the region and economy. The second would be that the success of the movement proved that it could be done in this way. More importantly, this also meant that, as long as the flow of immigration remained viable and

²¹⁶ Ibid. Page 159.

²¹⁷ Marinbach, Bernard. *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y. 1983. Page 168.

²¹⁸ Ibid. Page 27.

did not contribute to any additional problems, the United States would continue to be open to newcomers. However, if the flow of immigrants would result in the creation of more ghettos, poor economic conditions, poverty and unemployment, then this would only fuel the desire to enforce restriction and further limit immigration into America.

In the years that the Galveston Movement existed, the main task was to find the immigrants work and a community to live in as an important step to becoming a citizen. According to Jacob Billikopf an important Jewish philanthropist and part of the Galveston team in the midwest, “the process of Americanizing, or normalizing the Jewish immigrants begins when the newcomer embarks for America... that moment all his radicalism evaporates as he becomes a full fledged and law abiding member of the community.”²¹⁹ With the future in some sense dependant on the success of what happened in Galveston, there was considerable pressure on this southern option to make the right decisions and create beneficial results. According to Schiff’s biographer, this key figure in the American Jewish community “knew he had to use his resources in ways calculated to turn the newcomers into productive and loyal citizens as quickly as possible.”²²⁰

Schiff’s concern with the success of Galveston and the perception of Jews in America revealed a deeper passion. At one time, he reportedly described his task as to better integrate Jewish immigrants and to improve their image. This would then improve the public perception

²¹⁹ Alroey, Gur. Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004).Page 145.

²²⁰ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 85.

of Judaism and unify American Jews. In her biography of Jacob Schiff, Naomi Cohen wrote how Schiff constantly worried about “the image projected by the Jews.”²²¹ This suggests that he wanted the Jewish immigrants associated with Galveston to be leaders or role models for other newcomers. As Gur Alroey comments, the Galveston immigrants were considered to be of higher quality because the movement did not accept the kind of immigrant that was “dejected, bitterly poor and ragged.... dregs of the nation.”²²² For this reason, a positive image of these newcomers to the American Jewish community could have had great implications for the larger picture of the way Jews were perceived, especially by the local Jewish communities since there was a tendency by many American Jews “to judge Jewish actions through the prism of what will the Gentiles say?”²²³ In other words, to elevate the actions of Jews or the Jewish community based on how the Gentile community perceived what the Jews did or said became a measure of the acceptability of their action.

As a consequence, it seemed that American Jews understood that if a problem emerged, such as overcrowding or the creation of larger ghettos, it was the responsibility of the Jewish community to take whatever action had to be taken, since it reflected on all Jews in America. Therefore I would argue that the Galveston movement was a Jewish American response to problems arising from increasing number of Jewish immigrants. The established Jewish communities in America were concerned that the negative consequences resulting from the

²²¹ Ibid. Page 50.

²²² Alroey, Gur. “Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century”. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004).Page 143

²²³ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 85.

immigration influx were also contributing to a fear for the public image of the Jewish people. Instead of seeing the Jews individuals, the perception of Jews as a poor, wretched, deprived, and pathetic population would become part of a popular myth. Schiff and others associated with the Galveston movement recognized that this would be the outcome if the situation was not handled correctly. Schiff and other philanthropists felt so strongly about this issue that they privately “supported possible candidates for professional and intellectual careers... to counteract the stereo-type of the Jew.”²²⁴ For the individuals associated with the Galveston movement, an attempt was made to lessen the concerns caused by the situation on the east coast and create a positive public perception of the Jewish newcomers. Through the Galveston program, it was hoped that the newcomers would be perceived as having a productive nature through an immigration process that was able to help the immigrants adjust to their new way of life. Alluding to this, Irving Howe wrote that “communities struggling for survival seldom rush to announce their failures... and over the centuries the Jews had developed a cultural style encouraging prudishness and self censorship.”²²⁵ It was a kind of public facade that protected the Jewish community and was necessary if the negative consequences of the immigration situation continued.

If the new Jewish immigrants were going to successfully integrate into American society, they had to become a part of the greater society and participate in its culture. Jacob Schiff believed that the Galveston project could achieve this for Jewish immigrants since it offered a different approach to immigrant integration. Naomi Cohen suggests that for Schiff, communal

²²⁴ Ibid. Page 91.

²²⁵ Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976. Page 96

responsibility meant that he acted for the good of the community as he interpreted it without sharing plans or strategy...".²²⁶ Schiff was well aware that the conditions on the eastern seaboard were deteriorating and that this would continue if some kind of change or new system was put into place. He felt that the "amelioration of ghetto conditions and even the goal of rapid Americanization were not only ends in themselves, but also a means to build up the image of the desirable Jewish immigrants," wrote Naomi Cohen.²²⁷ Therefore the key to improving the condition for Jews within North American society would be by Jews blending into the main community. Years earlier, Cyrus Sulzberger, a well known leader of the Jewish community of New York City suggested how difficult it was for Jews to become part of a society and added a note of caution. For Sulzberger "there is a prejudice against us in Christian hearts. But let us not feed it."²²⁸

Immigrants becoming part of a new community was a central idea of the Galveston project. These new communities across the Southern and Midwestern United States were places where few Jews lived and it would be an opportunity for the average American to become familiar with what a Jewish person was like. Once again Jacob Schiff maintained that the most viable response to any form of anti-Semitism was to be addressed through intensive Americanization and faithful patriotism. Gur Alroey has even suggested that Jewish immigration between 1870

²²⁶ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 44

²²⁷ Ibid. Page 156.

²²⁸ Glazier, Jack. *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 9.

and 1914 “transformed the conditions of the Jewish people unrecognizably.”²²⁹ Through the course of the Galveston Movement, it was said because that Schiff had his fingers on the pulse of the Jewish community, he tried to direct how events would transpire and “laboured to mould Jewish public opinion.”²³⁰

Schiff was known as a “steward of the community”. In that time, this meant, that as a community leader, his actions reflected the responsibility to take charge, while protecting the community’s image and choosing the policies that it should adopt. Schiff represented the leaders of the American Jewish community who were attempting to not just address a crisis but who “offered guidance by their public actions and personal conduct as to how the group (in this case, the Jews) could best achieve continuity of the Jewish identity.”²³¹ Menahem Sheinkin one of the early refugees to head to Palestine and one of the founders of Tel Aviv, is quoted as saying that there is a need for a different image of Jews or “the name Jew in the port jargon will become synonymous for weak, the poor, the lowly, and the contemptuous,”²³² Recognizing this issue, Jacob Schiff became a unifying force who had the ability to fuse different fractions within the Galveston Movement. His leadership occurred at a time that required someone of the stature as Schiff who had “a sense of greatness and a sense of collective vision.”²³³ Overall,

²²⁹ Alroey, Gur. “Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century”. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004). Page 146.

²³⁰ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 45.

²³¹ Ibid. Page 48.

²³² Alroey, Gur. Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and ideology in the early twentieth century. *American Jewish Archives*, Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 56, 1-2,(2004). Page 142.

²³³ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 248.

his actions contributed to “a communal fabric where people of the most diverse pursuits felt related one to the other, to the community at large, and to the Jewish people as a whole.”²³⁴

In hindsight, the Galveston movement was clearly conscious and concerned about the image of the Jewish immigrants arriving in America. As increasing numbers of people began arriving through Galveston, the newspapers of the era would often mention the arrival of a ship and if any troublesome occurrence was reported. To illustrate this, I choose to use some local newspapers in Texas – The Galveston Daily News and San Antonio Gazette, as a source to learn about this period, the immigration movement and in what way this information was presented to the public. What emerged from these newspaper stories, was a glimpse just how these new Americans were adjusting to their life in their new country. In essence, although the stories in the local papers simply present surface details and the activities of some immigrants activities of certain philanthropic organizations, it was still possible to ascertain some overall details about the newcomers and the Galveston Movement

These occasional articles were able to provide not just a glimpse into the conditions of the immigrants, but how the Galveston Movement creatively presented a picture of an active and productive group of people arriving to help contribute and build America. For the Galveston Movement, the task was to display these immigrants as hard working people, ready to work and vastly different from the East Coast immigration experience. In the *San Antonio Gazette* of June 18, 1907, there is a small article indicating the arrival of Jewish immigrants in Galveston. As one of several nationalities of newcomers arriving at the active seaport, the arrival of the

²³⁴ Ibid.

“Russian Jews” was considered part of a regular occurrence. A few weeks later, the same newspaper acknowledged the Jewish Immigrant Bureau by name as “doing good work taking care of these people.”²³⁵ Not surprisingly, the *Galveston Daily News* the day before in a large feature confirms how busy the Jewish Immigrant Bureau has been with the recent arrival of newcomers. In the article, the writer indicates that the immigrants are doing fine and “well on their way to the various destinations assigned to them by the bureau.”²³⁶ Clearly the value of such a report was to diminish the concerns and negative expectations of the local community and of all Americans. The encouraging perception of a well organized and fully functional system would serve to create a positive perception of the issue of immigration and the new Jewish immigrants.

However, not all was positive and some stories could derail the earlier image. In the *Galveston Daily* of April 20th, 1910, a feature story discussed the detention of 110 Jewish immigrants for medical reasons such as tuberculosis, trachoma and other related eye problems.^{vi} With little additional information or follow-up, this presents the problematic situation without making reference to the arrival of earlier groups with few problems. Although a considerable number of immigrants were involved, few details were presented as to why this situation had come about. Realizing the impact of this kind of news, upon the arrival of a group of new immigrants in September, the heading in a feature article in the *Galveston* paper read – “Movement of Immigrants – Conditions Favorable for Growth”.²³⁷ The details within the article suggested that

²³⁵ *San Antonio Gazette*. San Antonio, Texas. July 3, 1907.

²³⁶ *Galveston Daily News*. Galveston, Texas. July 2, 1907. Page 9.

²³⁷ *Ibid*. September 1, 1910.

“the class of immigrants have been more desirable from every stand point.”²³⁸ Acknowledging the Jewish Immigrant Bureau was doing great work, this new group of Jewish immigrants was important because these people were “filling up the gaps in agriculture.”²³⁹ No doubt this follow up was helpful and added to the image that the Galveston Movement was hoping to convey concerning the goals of the movement.

Another concern related to the Galveston Movement had to do with the payment of expenses for the immigrants arriving on each boat. Since the payment of expenses for these immigrants was the responsibility of the immigrant, there was concern in the American public that American Jewish organizations were funding the immigrants– which was illegal. As part of a feature article in the *Galveston Daily News*, questions of this nature were discussed especially whether the government’s standards for acceptance of immigrants were followed.²⁴⁰ With the funding of immigrants not permitted, the writer wondered whether or not the organization (Jewish Immigration Bureau) was respecting the law? Once again, the article was incomplete and could have lead to additional public speculation with an inaccurate perception of the circumstances. As another example of incomplete reporting for whatever reason, the story may have conveyed a wrongful image of the Jewish refugees. It would come as no surprise that this might have lead to a heightened concern about the arriving immigrants and would have worried the general community.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Galveston Daily News, August 21, 1910. Page 2.

Throughout the period of the Galveston Movement this form of newspaper articles appeared. Whether the newspapers had an agenda cannot be confirmed at this time. However given the tone of certain features, it would seem that an emphasis on building up the organization was more than just a coincidence. Consider a major article in the May 14th 1912 edition of the *Galveston Daily News* on the Galveston Movement. In this feature found on page 5, the writer speaks of a “history making phase”. Reporting the contents of a major speech and presentation about the Jewish Immigration Bureau by the then manager Henry Berman, the article quotes Berman boasting how this group of Jewish immigrants who have been spiritually cramped for centuries “come here to us for a new start in life.”²⁴¹ Probably the most significant part of the feature indicates how this is one of the great issues of the day and that “America is a saviour to the Jews.”²⁴² America is a place where all people are interwoven as one great people, the writer concludes.²⁴³

Jacob H. Schiff’s actions through the Galveston Movement were influenced by American growing concerns about the immigrant situation. Schiff thought that “molding immigrants into skilled workers would both Americanize them and counteract the popular image of Jews as a foreign element in society.”²⁴⁴ He supported the betterment of Jews in America without diminishing his respect and concern for the United States. At the same time, he maintained

²⁴¹ *Galveston Daily News*, May 14, 1912. Page 9

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Cohen, Naomi W. *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*. Brandeis University Press, Hanover, N.H., 1999. Page 248. Page 91

with growing awareness and skilfulness that philanthropy was a form of social control.²⁴⁵ For Schiff this was an idea that clearly empowered his efforts, although not everyone agreed with his tactics. It is known that Schiff approached helping his fellow Jews and providing social assistance not as a business man but principally as a Jew, wrote one of his biographers' Naomi W. Cohen.²⁴⁶ For Schiff, the placement of Jewish immigrants across America was a vital issue confronting the Jewish community at the time. It was something he believed had great consequences, especially with regard to the potential spread of anti-Semitism in North America. The Galveston movement organization he created had the potential to make a big difference in alleviating pressure from the eastern ports before the situation would result in immigration restrictions. Built into his model of helping to change the immigration process was an important consideration for the manner that Jews were introduced into the society and how that society viewed this group of people.

Since the actions of the Jewish organization continued to remain concerned with the perception of these immigrants, it was necessary for those responsible to guide the transition of these newcomers with this in mind. . As a consequence of this, I believe that Jacob Schiff may have used these circumstances as an instrument of "social control" which served to mold the type of person best suited for the American lifestyle. In some sense, the actions of Schiff and his supporters created a form of elitist control when it came to the immigrant situation in the United States. Whether this was based on a belief that those in a better position were responsible for their brethren, the fear of creating larger ghettos, or just out of good will –

²⁴⁵ Ibid. Page 62.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. Page 154.

there was a definite attempt to influence how the newcomers were seen. If the Jewish refugees were to be successfully integrated into the North American lifestyle, the Galveston project did what was necessary so that the immigrants would have to become like the rest of the population. Unity and participation was a primary consideration for growth and advancement of a community. Dividing the population into classes or kinds – such as Jew versus non-Jew-- would only result in hardship and work against what many believed would be a strong America. I believe Jacob H. Schiff, like many other philanthropists during this time, was influenced by the idea of productivization, i.e. to improve the public perception of Jews as people who were hard working and actively participating to build a better society. Naomi Cohen wrote that the great philanthropist once said that immigrants did not cause Jew hatred but, it is “the peculiarities of their manners and customs that could conceivably exacerbate it.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ Ibid. Page 85.

Chapter 5

Productivization in Russia

In describing the economic situation for Jews in Russia circa mid 1800's, Eli Lederhendler suggests that Russia had developed "a generally adverse effect on economic opportunity for Jewish trades people, manufacturers, and artisans, who were mainly occupied in the production and sale of consumer goods, an area that did not progress rapidly."²⁴⁸ This combined with a history of persecution and extensive social limitations, sets the stage for the gradual exodus of Jews after 1880. Prior to this, there were several undertakings by members of the affluent Jewish community situated in the Russia city of St. Petersburg. Initiated as an attempt to change the situation for Jews in Eastern Europe, it might be said that this was an effort to balance out what was an unbalanced society. The question was – could such undertakings change the long history of the second-class Russian Jew?

For the purpose of this dissertation, I wish to argue that the situation in Russia during the era of the "great migration" was similar to that in previous chapters where a community organization had a program to address the negative perception of Jews, and place them in a better light. The Jewish philanthropic groups in Russia attempted to introduce the idea of productivization as a means of making the Jewish population more a part of the society. Related to this philanthropic venture, the groups were very concerned regarding the perception of Russian Jews and desired to defuse the negative perception of Jews in the society. Since their

²⁴⁸ Lederhendler, Eli. *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class*. Cambridge University Press, N.Y., 2009. Page 5

premise was that changing how Jews lived and worked would improve their condition in Russia, the two philanthropic agencies analyzed in this section functioned in a similar manner as organizations depicted in earlier sections. With as much as 70 percent of the Jewish labour force in Russia considered as “working poor”, part of a total Jewish community population of five million by 1897, a dramatic change was needed in the eyes of a group of concerned Russian Jews.²⁴⁹ For these individuals, the main concern was to introduce a series of programs that would better prepare, educate, and provide occupational training for members of the Jewish community. With an emphasis more on the secular, these community organizations minimized religious influence and worked to organize Russian Jews in a workforce that was productive. By following this program, members of these committees were confident that they would not only improve life for the Jewish population but at the same time change the perception of Jewish people by the non-Jewish Russian population.

Similar to Jewish philanthropic organizations elsewhere, there seemed to be an unwritten strategic attitude to remain vigilant concerning the non-Jewish perception of the Jewish population. In North America, several philanthropic organizations worked diligently to present a good image of the arriving immigrants and avoid creating problematic situation as a result of large numbers of immigrants. In Eastern Europe, there were two philanthropic organizations that maintained a similar goal primarily to prevent a growing segment of the Jewish population from leaving Russia. Related to this situation was the task of improving the perception of Russians who viewed the Jews as unproductive and a troublesome part of their society. In

²⁴⁹ Ibid. Page 7.

addition to sustaining the Jewish population, early Russian philanthropic activity envisioned a stronger Jewish presence by (a) improving their situation as labourers and (b) improving the understanding of the host population concerning what Jews were like. Once again the issue was not so much the way things actually were, but what people believed was reality – something that could be manipulated either way.

I start by addressing how a segment of the Russian Jewish community endeavoured to reinvent the perception of the average Jew. Essentially, this shares a similar form of reasoning with that of the people who were responsible for the creation of farming colonies and the redirection of thousands of immigrants in the Galveston Movement in North America. At this stage, I suggest that there were three main factors why this relationship exists. The first condition is that a particular region has a problem with the Jewish population in association with the main community. The second factor is concerned with how to improve the perception of Jews from negative to one that is more positive. The third condition, somewhat different from the second, is a concern to combat the proliferation of anti-Semitism that could result because of issues related to the Jewish population. It seems evident that each condition played an important role during the era when Jews were arriving in North America. As significant individual variables, these conditions reflected the consequences of the introduction of a new element in a relatively stable population. Therefore, with the introduction of a new group of people, there is always concern as to how the two populations will integrate.

After years of an unbalanced and hostile situation for Jews living within Russia, the mid-1800's was a time of many changes. With a large portion of the Jewish population

underprivileged and with few skills or training, a change would be beneficial. In an attempt to create better conditions and avoid a continuous exodus, the first philanthropic Jewish group was formed in Russia. One of the original founders, Nikolai Baskt who was a strong advocate of education, felt that a minimizing of social tensions would result from an improvement in education and revised occupational training for the Jewish population. Baskt was confident that “along with education, the development of productive labour and training for practical occupations was necessary for the survival of Russian Jewry.”²⁵⁰ It was a time when most Russian Jews were living in poverty and under restrictive conditions. Today, Israel Bartal, suggests that this is because the “imperial officials as well as members of the intelligentsia were of two minds: one tendency was to integrate the Jews into Russia society or, more accurately, into the Russian state; the other was to reject, alienate, or even oust this foreign, insular population.... to distance them as far as possible...”²⁵¹ With minimum political power and at times little if any influence, Baskt and other members of the small affluent Russian Jewish community began to organize with the hope of finding a solution for this negative attitude. Even though a broad range of educational and occupational training of Russian Jews ensued, their social and economic advancement was minimal. The question remained, could the transformation of Russian Jews actually succeed in strengthening the role of Jews in Russia and would it be possible to portray the new Jew in a more positive light?

²⁵⁰ Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 35.

²⁵¹ Bartal, Israel. *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2005. Page 134.

The first group to attempt to address the Jewish situation in Russia was known as OPE, and was formed in 1863. As a Russian acronym for the “Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia”, this Russian Jewish philanthropic group started out in a similar manner to the Alliance Israelite Universelle in France. Originating in an initiative to provide assistance and training to the Jewish community, OPE’s effort attempted to integrate more trained and educated Jews into the Russian economic system. In the words of Horace Gintsburg, a wealthy Russian aristocrat who was involved with OPE, “Russian Jews should fight to improve the conditions of their life in their own country”.²⁵² Gintsburg’s words attempted to motivate the community to engage these issues rather than run away from them. His words emphasized that actions were necessary and they conveyed a clear message that change begins with people assuming responsibility for improving their situation. As the flow of disenfranchised Jews leaving the region of Eastern Europe increased, many wealthy Russian Jews felt that this “running away” phenomenon had to be stopped. Could improving the situation for Jews actually make a difference in a place like Russia, with its history of discrimination against the Jewish community? Or was the situation like David Vital wrote that “the eastern Jews were therefore overwhelmingly a dissident class – in the sense that they wanted and badly needed radical change; and if change within Russia was impossible, very great numbers were prepared to affect it by extricating themselves from that country...”²⁵³ The situation was complex and was certainly going to deteriorate if nothing was done. Although numerous theories were presented and recommendations proposed, some form of direct action had to be taken. There were no

²⁵² Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 36.

²⁵³ Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975. Page 203

guarantees that the exodus of Jews would stop or the situation for would improve. The end result was that both options continued since the Russian Jews were divided on this question.

One major problem for OPE, was that the percentage of the Jewish community that could participate was limited, and concern was expressed that the new undertaking would have little impact. Members of OPE, according to Brian Horowitz, also realized “that integration alone was insufficient to revitalize Russian Jewry.”²⁵⁴ The method of integration and the need to address certain key issues showed that a delicate balance had to be achieved in order to facilitate success. Although the early activities of the Jewish philanthropists in Russia were limited, some of their efforts gently pushed the Jewish community into becoming more engaged with Russian society. In one sense, an organization like OPE was responding to an important social issue, while specialized training programs and increased social interactions were presenting Jews with new problems to address.

Beginnings – A Closer Look

In an effort to create stability and improved working conditions for Jews, OPE organized to take on the challenge in Russia. Lead by Evzel Gintzberg and A.M. Brody, part of a group of wealthy Jews, OPE was concerned about the perception of Jews in Russia - could the image of Jews be changed or improved? If this was possible, would that lead to an even greater change in conditions for Jews in the country? Some scholars like Brian Horowitz suggest that “integration alone was insufficient to revitalize Russian Jewry...”, but that it was an initial

²⁵⁴ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 7

program to strengthen secular culture and educational institutions that might achieve some progress.²⁵⁵ With these kinds of changes, it would become possible for more Jews to integrate, into an improved Russian society. These Russian Jewish philanthropists, according to David Vital, were not attempting to persuade Jews to return to Russia, but they were also “not encouraging the Jews to evacuate Russia and to inhibit those who were hesitating from doing so.”²⁵⁶ Their task was to suggest that change would lead to further changes that would result in the betterment of all.

OPE also had a program to fund some Jewish educational activities where there was little opportunity, or facilities. By providing funding of this nature, OPE opened doors to some Jews where education was prohibited or funds were limited. Jews were also trained as farmers, machinists, carpenters, mechanics and other forms of skilled work. OPE thus facilitated opportunities for more Jews to become part of the Russian work force. As the number of educated Jews increased, it was expected that changes would start to occur that would contribute to a different perception of the Jew among the Gentile population. It seemed clear that OPE was successful in actually assisting the gradual emergence of this new Jew – to bring the Jews into Russian society.²⁵⁷ Even though the Russian Jews aware of the OPE programs accepted the organization as an important facilitator, there were some who were opposed to its activity. From a suspicion of cooperation with the Russian government, to the belief in an

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975. Page 61.

²⁵⁷ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 33

agenda that was based on the concerns of the wealthy, these major criticisms would determine how the role of OPE was interpreted. In many ways, it's most effective service was to serve more as a mediating entity between the Jews and the Russian leadership. Perhaps this was a key factor that contributed to the longevity of the group.

These suspicions within the Jewish community about reasons for this project lead to the belief that, as much as OPE seemed to be an independent community effort, there was another agenda not for public knowledge. This concern suggested that OPE may have been working with the Russian government to "Russify" the Jewish community. Russification, understood as a program that consisted of making Jews more Russian through educational and economic programs while discouraging other ethnic qualities such as religious practices, caused concern. In a recent book on Jewish immigration, Todd Endelman speaks to how OPE in one sense mediated between the Jewish population and the Russian government. At the same time, OPE's programs of retraining were a mechanism that presented "the best possible image of Judaism and Jewish life to the non-Jewish world."²⁵⁸ It was an agenda that OPE hoped would help Russian Jews adjust to their social environment while at the same time weakening the community's structure and bonds which were the basis of its Jewishness. For Brian Horowitz, OPE not only contributed to and empowered a strong secular Jewish leadership but, "was particularly influential in promoting a synthetic identity, Russian and Jewish, cosmopolitan and yet respectful of Jewish traditions."^{vii} Introducing more Russian culture was a means to reverse the priority of allegiance from Judaism to Russia. At the same time, even though there was

²⁵⁸ Endelman, Todd M. "Assimilation." YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe 13 July 2010. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Assimilation>>.

some recognition and minimal maintenance of Jewish culture –focusing on the cultural, such as the celebration of Jewish holidays, Yiddish language, and foods. Most forms of religious activities or participation were considered less important.

Transforming the Russian Jew culturally and economically seemed like a reasonable solution, but was not guaranteed to make the Gentile population welcome Jews as coworkers. Since OPE hoped that this would lead to a gradual transformation of Russian society as a whole, the basis for cooperation was no more than a disingenuous relationship. In essence, even though OPE was based on an ideology that supported Jewish advancement by improving the relations between the Jews and Russians, the overall Russian population may not have been ready to take these steps since there was a long history of an anti-Jewish environment. On the other hand, some OPE supporters considered that this was the only way to bring about a stronger Jewish community that would be accepted and welcomed into Russian society. In hindsight, this was a conclusion that I believe seemed more realistic to OPE than the Russian government or Russians at large.

After years of Russians thinking of Jews as both economic and social problems, some within the Jewish community believed that it was pressure from the outside world that would gradually begin to effect the Russian government. In Stephen Berk's discussion of Eastern Europe during the 1880s, he suggests that increased social pressure by the American Jewish community may have had an impact on Russian government. From minor rumblings such as small rallies to large public protests in the United States and England, these demonstrations illustrated that Jewish communities outside of Russia were extremely upset about the

limitations and poor treatment of Jews within the Russian Empire.²⁵⁹ Around the same time, messages of concern were sent by the Government of the United States to the Russian government demanding a change in policy. The Russian government ignored these protests and there was no change in governmental restrictions on Jews in that country. Nothing changed and life for Jews continued to be difficult.

Brian Horowitz acknowledges that OPE followed an operational style that was significantly influenced by productivization. Thus the organization's plans and actions attempted to change the activities of Russian Jews to be more active and productive members of their society. Consequently, "OPE was particularly influential in promoting a synthetic identity."²⁶⁰ With only a very small group of wealthy Jews supporting OPE, how could it relate to the life conditions of the average Russian Jew? Knowing this, OPE, like many Jewish organizations, and individuals, believed that full emancipation would only become possible through the transformation of the Jewish people. Therefore, in some sense, OPE may have represented a ray of hope that Russian Jews needed. Through work and education, perhaps it was possible to change the status of Jews within Eastern Europe.

Whether or not OPE "played a role in shaping attitudes, formulating identity, and changing Jewish self awareness," is a difficult question to answer.²⁶¹ At that time, becoming more

²⁵⁹ Berk, Stephen M. *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the pogroms of 1881-1882*. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT. 1985. Page 145.

²⁶⁰ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 13

²⁶¹ Ibid. Page 227.

Russian was to be like other Russians in the way they dressed, the language they spoke and how they behaved. As someone who played an important role in the direction of OPE, Horace Gintsburg served as a model for the ideal of a new Russian Jew. However, Gintsburg had an advantage over the average Jewish person, simply because he had the abundant resources to do so.²⁶² Jews like Horace Gintsburg made it a point to fit in to the Russian way of life and to let go of the backward and unrefined character that had been associated with Jews for centuries. If change was to be achieved, it would be done through the “cultivation, grace and physical strength. In fact, even his physical appearance was meant to signal what a Jew could become in the right circumstances.”²⁶³ Since the goal of productivization was embedded in the ideology of OPE, this meant replacing the perception of Jews as poor and uneducated with a new, revitalized and educated Russian-like person who was a productive member of the society.

A Second Effort

In the mid 1880’s, another group of wealthy Jews, some of whom were part of the earlier effort, embarked upon a similar effort, but with a greater emphasis on creating more projects promoting physical labour. Known originally as the Temporary Committee of the Society of Crafts and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia, this group only received a permanent charter in 1906.²⁶⁴ During its formative years, this new organization created a buzz within the Russian Jewish community that once again emphasized how “the idea of productive labour, of

²⁶² Ibid. Page 22.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Page 69.

men trained for the new tasks”- would result in self-reliant men, proud of their work.^{viii} With many restrictions still in place, Russian society portended little if any change on the horizon. ORT wanted to induce a stronger momentum within the community with the hope that this new direction would radically change the perception of Jews.

With regard to ORT’s goal of improving the perception of Russian Jews as a more productive group, this undertaking was to involve most of the Russian Jewish community. Besides creating a series of work projects and specialized occupational training, the task was to improve the level of engagement of Jews in the Russian economy. Success for such a program was to be measured by an increase in the number of Jews working as tradesmen and perhaps a decrease in the number of aggressive interactions against the Russian Jewish population. There were two key issues standing in the way of such an accomplishment. The first problematic variable was the Russian government that imposed many restrictions and requirements on the groups like OPE and ORT regarding how they could function. More importantly, since these groups were situated in St. Petersburg and Odessa, they were at a disadvantage because most Jews were located within the Pale of Settlement. With a limited population to work with in St. Petersburg and at a great distance from the Pale, OPE failed partly because of this reason and no doubt also because the wealthy Jews living in St. Petersburg could not relate to what the average Jew was experiencing. Merely a historic connection based on Jewishness and the ancient commitment to help one’s fellow Jew was not enough for OPE to affect considerable change. Furthermore, it was next to impossible for the wealthy Jews living in luxury and special advantages in St. Petersburg to understand the struggle of Jews living in the Pale of Settlement.

As mentioned earlier, the second effort after OPE to improve the situation for Jews was initiated by Nikolai Bakst who was one of the leading figures of the movement. As a Gentile educator and philanthropist, Bakst was one of the original founders of the organization known as the "ORT". Although some of OPE's board members later joined the with ORT, this new organization followed a similar path to OPE by funding educational and occupational training projects designed to make a considerable difference in the perception of Jews in Russia. Once the group became more active, Bakst and his colleagues started to introduce additional programs that they hoped would not only involve Jews, but elevate their skills and knowledge in other types of vocations. Throughout the early years from 1906 to 1910, ORT's activities continued to support and improve already existing trade schools, while opening new ones. With a greater emphasis on becoming more productive, the solicitation of funds by ORT provided opportunities for Jews where there were none before. In addition to education programs, funding was directed to helping existing farming communities become stronger, backing the establishment of new efforts, and starting agricultural schools.

According to some scholars, questions arose whether the Jewish intelligentsia involved with ORT were actually concerned about Russian Jews or whether other motives were part of their agenda. According to Leon Shapiro, although there was a general concern for the welfare of the Jewish people, this was "merely a part of their political commitment to the general improvement of conditions in Russia."²⁶⁵ If Jews were going to survive, , they not only had to "change the whole socio-economic structure of the Ghetto... (but) ...change the Jewish social

²⁶⁵ Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 30.

patterns as a means of doing so called proletarianization, productivization – that is work with one's hands.”²⁶⁶ Even with a strong commitment to social improvement, there was an undisclosed undercurrent looking forward to a rejection of the traditional model of Jewish behavior in place of a new Russian Jew – a more active worker.

Emancipation through labour was an idea embedded in the thinking of some of the founders of ORT and originally OPE. Certainly this seemed like a justifiable reason to create these organizations to encourage a new role for Jews in Russia. However, training, education and work were only part of the problem. Of great concern in this ORT scenario was the negative perception of Jews by the Russian population and Government. The perception of Jews clearly fuelled the proliferation of anti-Semitism – especially when this was supported by the Russian Government. Only in the years after the revolution, would considerable change in the political ideology take place, and Russia would become more open to the greater involvement of Jews.

Although the directives of ORT were designed to empower and enhance the role of Jews in Russian society, there were limitations as to how and when this could be achieved. Even though a small number of Jews began participating in occupational retraining programs, there were a limited number of opportunities for Jews to become part of the work force. Even as ORT began and extended its training programs, the opportunity for Jews would never equal what was available to the average Russian citizen. Influenced by continuous social tensions and an enflamed hatred of Jews that had been fuelled for years, modifying the perception of Jews

²⁶⁶ Ibid. Page 356.

would absorb most of ORT's efforts for change.²⁶⁷ ORT's activities seemed to provide the community with a sense that this was more than a hopeful undertaking. Gradually, as aid was extended to projects like vocational schools and farms, ORT's programs were extended deeper within the Pale of Settlement. With these work programs changing a hopeless condition into an opportunity, Russian Jews now had a chance to succeed and were pointed to a better future.

For other early ORT founders such as Samuel Poliakov and Baron Horace Gintsburg, there was a need to go beyond the usual. Having been part of OPE, the new group tried to develop a successful organization that would be better supported by the community. ORT's early founders who were "financiers and industrialists, barons and professors—[who] broke with the tradition that made them spokesmen of heretofore passive Jewish masses and opened the door to a social activity founded on wider democratic bases."²⁶⁸ Attempting to become more of a reflection of the Jewish community, the leadership felt it was necessary to extend their reach throughout the country and bring a greater number of Russian Jews into their programs. From this, the results would gradually open doors for Jews to provide opportunities to participate more within Russian society. In the words of Nikoli Bakst, "along with education, the development of productive labour and training for practical occupations was necessity for the survival of Russian Jewry."²⁶⁹ If more Russian Jews were involved in productive trades this would reduce the numbers in shop-keeping, petty trading and many jobless people, radically transforming the Jewish work force. ORT's leadership was confident that the organization

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Page 45.

²⁶⁸ http://old.ort.spb.ru/history/eng/ort_start.htm – "History and Foundations of World ORT".

²⁶⁹ Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 35.

would be successful and move the community one step closer toward the eventual social emancipation of Jews.

From the very beginning, the goal of transforming the Russian Jews remained ORT's foremost priority. In some respects, it seemed like a simple strategy supported by the belief that all Jews had to do "to become fully fledged Russian citizens is to abandon their medieval occupations" and that change was inevitable.²⁷⁰ It was that simple; change one's way of living, and this would lead to a totally new social condition. For if the Russian Jews would be transformed and given opportunities that they had been denied for centuries, this would change the very nature of their society.

Looking at the statistics during the first nine years of the distribution of funds by ORT's "Provisional Committee", the majority of funds dispersed were allocated to artisans, followed by subsidies to farmers and specialized vocational schools.²⁷¹ This funding produced some additional jobs but regrettably only a minor improvement of the economic situation for those Jews who did find work. There was a bigger problem that had less to do with finding the work and more to do with the consequences of working in Russia during this period. According to Eli Lederhandler, "when Jews worked alongside non-Jews in the same factory, a pattern of discrimination left the Jews with low-grade jobs, long hours, and less pay."²⁷² This illustrates the complexity of trying to mix Jews and Gentiles, considering the history of social friction that

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid. Page 47.

²⁷² Lederhendler, Eli. *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class*. Cambridge University Press, N.Y., 2009. Page 6

existed prior to and during these times. It thus appeared that there was little consideration given to the reaction of the non-Jewish population.

During the first twenty-five years of ORT's history, Jews in Russia were more involved in everything from agriculture to the emerging industrial factories of the 20th Century. Even though there were still many Jews involved in such service professions as barbers, shoe-makers, tailors, and watchmakers, the number of Jews becoming more skilled workers had increased. Even though more Jews were better trained as industrial workers, these workers were still harassed and continued to suffer from restrictive laws and opposition from the Gentile workforce.²⁷³

Although ORT was created to inspire and promote a new direction by introducing greater participation through productivization for Russian Jews, no great change had occurred. Perhaps the work of ORT did make a difference in certain regions, since after the Russian Revolution the relationship and role of Jews would eventually change within the borders of the Soviet Union. This meant that for the upcoming generations of Jews, a new dynamic would arise because more Jews were separated from the "uncertain business deals and marginal commercial activities where they served as intermediaries, rather than engaging in occupations that require them to work with their hands."²⁷⁴ Moving away from troublesome associations of the past, many Jews seem to have been influenced because of the work and educational programs initiated by ORT and OPE.

²⁷³ Shapiro, Leon. *The History of ORT: A Jewish Movement for Social Change*. Schocken Books, N.Y. New York, 1980. Page 56.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

According to the founders of ORT, there was a sense of confidence that “once the Jew was educated in a productive occupation, his disabilities would begin to disappear” reported Leon Shapiro.²⁷⁵ ORT maintained an ideology that a future involving becoming more productive would certainly alter the relationship of Jews with others within society.

ORT strove to continue its original program of increasing the productivity of the Jews. In this, ORT was no different than other Jewish philanthropic organizations around the world that were hypnotised by this ideology, though its programs of training and education provided some relief to the situation of Jews within Russian society. The organization’s logic was that the transformation of the Jews was as simple as creating opportunities for productive labour and the rest would follow. Even though the development of farming colonies experienced numerous roadblocks, Alexander Ivanov felt they still had considerable promise and had “become a unique testing area for applying advanced strategies and practices of philanthropic activity.”²⁷⁶ Ivanov was confident that if such programs could be developed and maintained, a solution could be found. As part of this, if the Jewish population would take up the challenge, then most social and economic issues could be resolved. It is important “to point out that “ORTism”, played an important role in the transformation of ORT’s philanthropic activity – becoming a robust Jewish movement of social advancement.”²⁷⁷ After 1906, the new leadership of ORT was confident that “their philanthropic initiatives, directed toward transformation of Jewish society” would continue to be supported by Jews throughout the

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ivanov, Alexander. “From Charity to Productive Labour: The World ORT Union and Jewish Agriculture Colonization in the Soviet Union, 1923-38”. *East European Jewish Affairs*, Volume 37:1 April 2007. Page 1

²⁷⁷ Ibid. Page 9.

Russian Empire.²⁷⁸ Like the original founders who were members of the Russian elite, the new crop of ORT leaders differed in their views of the situation and the type of philanthropy that should be prioritized. Since the original group considered their activities as “a mild method of social reform”, the organization was less interested in a radical transformation of Russian Jewish society.²⁷⁹ The new direction constituted a basic change for the benefit of the society by simply having increasing the productive labour of Jews as the main focus.²⁸⁰ In other words, this course of action was aimed at the establishment of a new progressive socio-economic generation of Russian Jewry. This was a policy direction that minimized most issues and prioritized concerns for occupational enhancements and opportunities. According to an earlier ORT activist, Jacob Frumkin, the times required raising the quality and skills of Russian Jews, and improving their technical level and overall productivity.²⁸¹ Perhaps this could be considered a fine tuning of the Jewish workforce, elevating its recognition as quality labourers.

The productivization of Russian Jews was a bold attempt by groups like OPE and ORT. Productivization of Russian Jewry made real political sense to some in that era and it took root in a later period. “Productivization and agrarianization...constituted the philosophical backbone of the Soviet economic recovery after the civil war... and the solution to the Jewish Question.”²⁸² In the 1920’s, the Soviet Government introduced more Jewish friendly projects

²⁷⁸ Ibid. Page 8.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Page 6.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. Page 7.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Dekel-Chen, Jonathan. *Farming the Red Land: Jewish Agricultural Colonization and Local Soviet Power:1924-1941*. Yale University Press, New haven, CT. 2005. Page 26.

and greater participation within Soviet society. This ideology increased the number of Jewish agriculturalists and industrial workers that would gradually play a big role in the Soviet economy in the 1920's. In his book "Farming the Red Land", Jonathan Dekel-Chen explores the relationship between American Jewish organizations such as The Joint Agricultural Corporation of the American Joint Distribution Committee and its efforts to aid Jewish farmers in the growth of the Soviet Union. For a period after the revolution until the 1930's, government assistance with specialized programs followed along similar paths to that of ORT in an attempt to build bridges and reduce tensions in Russian society

In the years ahead, ORT would continue to evolve as an educational and training organization. As an association with a different direction after 1905, the group continued to increase its activities in Russia and eventually around the world. As one of the original founders, Nikolai Bakst once stated that "mundane philanthropy trivialized the solution of existing social injustices, reducing them to a question of aid."²⁸³ Thus ORT tried to avoid simply providing aid and attempted to create situations that improved the poor Russian Jew whether through education or professional training. Most importantly all this was to be a "pre-requisite for well being and social mobility."²⁸⁴

In looking back at the efforts of OPE and ORT, its leaders were just as concerned about the perception of Jews and about creating and educating a strong workforce as similar

²⁸³ Estraiikh, Gennady. Changing Ideologies of Artisanal "Productivization": ORT in Late Imperial Russia. *East European Jewish Affairs*, Volume 39:1, April, 2009. Page 4

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

organizations elsewhere. As a consequence, it should be no surprise that the idea of becoming more productive clearly played a role in this situation in Eastern Europe. Educating and training uneducated and unskilled Jews was a way of contributing to the perception of Jews as a productive people. For this reason, the programs initiated by OPE and ORT were both a statement of concern over the perception of Jews, a mechanism of improving their economic position, and a way of countering any anti-Jewish sentiment that could result because of the problems related to a socially unproductive population.

Even though the efforts of OPE and ORT had a powerful strategic direction, Russian Jews would never have been in a better position economically or as labourers no matter how hard they tried. Most of this was due to the historic negative perception that existed about Jews in Russia. Since the social situation in that country was toxic, the history of anti-Jewish behaviour was deeply rooted in the people and the government of that region. No matter how many complex and sophisticated networks were arranged to productivize the Russian Jew, the transformation never worked. Most efforts to transform the Russian Jew had little, if any effect.

Chapter 6

Productivization Programs for Immigrant Jews Arriving in North America

From the beginning of this dissertation, I have argued that most of the efforts to relocate East European Jews arriving in North America were broadly influenced by a methodology called productivization. In earlier chapters, I have attempted to argue that this was a common strategy which was adopted mainly to compensate for the negative perception of Jews during that time. In some sense, productivization was a hope to create an impression that Jews were hard workers and could be an industrious element to a society. With a long history of persecution of Jews in parts of Eastern Europe during the 1800's, the strategy of productivization was adopted as Jews attempted to change the way the Gentile population would see them. With considerable discussion about this issue at the onset of the Jewish migration from Eastern Europe, several Jewish philanthropic organizations in North America developed programs of settlement and assistance that reflected the essence of the idea of productivization. In the end, it was anticipated that these programs would improve the way Jewish immigrants would be seen and accepted within both Canada and the United States.

By acknowledging the concern for the public perception of Jews, Jewish philanthropic groups hoped that this new awareness of these immigrants de-emphasizing their perceived "ragtag" qualities and slothful nature, should lead to an improved image of the group. With the arrival of more and more Jews from the east, the situation was becoming increasingly complicated and wide spread. Reflecting the thinking of these times, an early editorial in "The Forward" written by Abraham Cahan in 1903 stated when "there are only a few Jews, gentiles go slumming to

inspect the novelty. When the Jews fill up the streetcars and parks, we (Jews) are resented.”²⁸⁵

That is, perhaps one or two Jews could be tolerated, but anything more would be too much to accept. With many Jews arriving daily, the concerns expressed by the local Jewish communities confirmed that this would be a difficult period of integration for East European Jews. Years earlier, the philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch had recognized this potential problem, and suggested that in order to improve the situation, “Jews must, be more like their neighbours, and settle in large numbers as sons of the soil in new lands....”.²⁸⁶ That is, Jews should make themselves just like their non-Jewish neighbours rather living apart as a distinctive enclave. Hirsch thought that for Jews the goal was to blend in into a community, thus creating an atmosphere of equality where each person had responsibilities for living within a unified society rather than existing in an assembly of ethnic groups.

In the context of the growing anxiety expressed by leaders of several Jewish immigrant support groups, there was a growing concern as to how these newcomers would adjust to the North American lifestyle. Although productivization was not just an idea or theory, but something that was often discussed as a realistic way that could influence how Jews were absorbed into a community. At this point, I am suggesting that this methodology did have a definite impact on the integration of immigrants, and that some Jewish philanthropic organizations, such as the Jewish Colonization Association. Consequently, these organizations

²⁸⁵ Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976. Page 126

²⁸⁶ Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 83.

created “programs” that directly tried to establish settlement opportunities as a way to creatively and consciously absorb East European Jewish immigrants into North American society. By adopting such a strategy, these Jewish groups may have felt that this would be helpful when the time came to relocate these immigrants into their new way of living. At the same time, programs of this nature might also be helpful to combat the proliferation of anti-Semitic feelings that was becoming an increasing problem in parts of the world including North America. In recognition of this, it seems possible that some Jewish philanthropic groups believed that such an approach could buffer the impact of these newcomers and the chaos associated with integrating a group of that size into society.

A Process of Integration

Arriving in the West free from the persecution of Eastern Europe, it was believed that these immigrant Jews would ideally be relocated by finding appropriate work in advance of their arrival. As many struggled to adjust to their new home, some immigrant Jews would also attempt to maintain a sense of familiarity through continuity with their European settlement patterns and congregated overwhelmingly in the urban hubs of Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg,” in Canada. In the United States, cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Boston were similar hubs or strong Jewish centres where Jews would find community associations and some continuity with the past. In these areas, the Jewish community established social and medical services that provided what was lacking or unavailable to Jewish residents and their coreligionists. Whether because of lack of services, or perhaps the absence of accommodation for Jews (e.g. kosher products), Jews within these “Jewish centres”, would create an elaborate network of social/medical services that were uniquely Jewish.

As large numbers of East European Jewish immigrants continued to arrive throughout North America, concern about anti-Semitism began to increase. Living in North America for the new immigrants meant adjusting to their surroundings as best they could; this often meant becoming like everyone else – in appearance, behaviour, and lifestyle. One of the significant ways this happened was associated with the purchase of consumer products and the general lifestyle choices that became links between the immigrants and their new world. Integration for many began as soon as they started to purchase consumer products that conveyed the message that one was just like everyone else. From household products, to clothes and food supplies the usage and consumption of similar consumer goods provided a door to the larger community. At this level, consumer consumption conveyed an acceptance of one's environment and participation within the community. It was significant that these immigrants have stated that American clothing and appearance were among the first symbols they adopted as a sign of cultural intermingling. It was clothing, according to Andrew R. Heinze, that became a means whereby Jewish immigrants announced their desire to fit into American society and to identify themselves as American Jews."²⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, the consumption of consumer goods also became "a viable way to express a change in identity, as newcomers transfer themselves psychologically from the old world to the new."²⁸⁸ Even though there was a desire to hold on to that which was familiar to ease the transition, the process of adjusting was strengthened by adopting local customs and products. The transformation of East European Jews had begun on

²⁸⁷ Heinze, Andrew R. *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Communication and the Search for American Identity*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1990. Page 90.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. Page 8.

different levels aided by this push to be similar, equal and relevant. What was significant, was that any activity that illustrated how these newcomers were becoming more productive.

According to Andrew R. Heinze, becoming part of a new society involved learning the language and participating in the institutions in order “to develop a new cultural identity.”²⁸⁹ For Jewish immigrants, learning English was essential in an effort to become more like their non-Jewish neighbours. Despite all their personal concerns, Jewish newcomers had a strong sense of hope and determination to adjust to their new homeland. Once again Heinze tells us that most East European Jews “immigrated with an intense desire, as well as a distinct ability, to fit quickly into American society.”²⁹⁰ Many Jews found their way into Western society by adopting popular lifestyle choices, dress, language and mannerisms that reflected their desire to become members of the dominant community. Overall, even though they adopted some of the benefits of the modern world, these changes “did not necessarily conflict with Jewish law,” according to the Heinze.²⁹¹ However, it was clear that “the lure of mass consumption combined with other conditions of the American city... eroded traditional Judaism.”²⁹²

Ultimately, the activities of living in and becoming part of North American society conveyed a message of association or belonging that the newcomers tried to adopt. The Jewish population embraced the American lifestyle with a certain amount of devotion, and purpose unmatched by other immigrant groups. Jewish immigrants learned quickly how to become part of the greater

²⁸⁹ Ibid. Page 9.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. Page 4.

²⁹¹ Ibid. Page 52.

²⁹² Ibid.

community by letting go of their ethnic qualities and adopting more of a North American lifestyle. Instead of distinct settlements, the direction for Jews was to integrate and to join in, creating affiliation as opposed to cultural isolation. For Jews from Eastern Europe, a lifestyle encouraging separateness or keeping one's distance from the main population only produced misunderstanding and division. In Eastern Europe, since there was a separation of the population, Jews lived as if they were what Brian Horowitz called "cultural outsiders".²⁹³ Adopting a settlement strategy of living together with non-Jews showed that across Eastern Europe "Jews were capable of being civilized."²⁹⁴

Commenting on how people integrate, James Bennett writes that "the degree to which we believe it is desirable and possible to change other peoples' cultures in a direction we believe to be desirable – usually, this is more like we perceive ourselves to be."²⁹⁵ This suggests that even though a society may desire similarity, the strategy reflects a social movement to achieve balance. According to Bennett, this perception of modern integration begins when two substantially different cultures mix together and on occasion producing more friction than can naturally be expected.²⁹⁶ When East Europeans Jews began arriving in North America, even though the goal was to adjust and mix in they actually changed the society. Similar to the earlier efforts of some Jewish philanthropic organizations, their strategy was to help the

²⁹³ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 39.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Bennett, James. "Assimilation and the Presence of Culture". *The New Criterion*, January, 2001. Page 29.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

immigrants become part of the community and not be separate from the group. Examples from this period indicate that Jews were attempting to become members of the greater society and actively searched for mechanisms to assimilate – that is, blend in. I think this idea is captured in a statement by Rais Kahn in the 1990's when he states that, "people regardless of their origin, do not emigrate to preserve their culture and nurture their ethnic distinctiveness. If they wish to do that, they would stay where they were...."²⁹⁷ The Immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe want to be an "American" or a "Canadian" – the question was – how?

In areas where the Jewish population of North America existed in sufficient numbers, the arrival of more and more immigrants was of concern to the gentile community. With government legislation limiting immigration discussed in both Canada and the United States after 1900, the increasing numbers of Jews seemed to be threatening and at times overwhelming in certain regions. Even though they didn't go unnoticed, "scholars have argued, Jews enjoyed a critical socioeconomic advantage. Not only did they ostensibly begin their climb up the economic ladder... but the direct transfer of previously honed skills to their new country also made for easier adaptation in general," wrote Eli Lederhendler.²⁹⁸ In this sense, Jewish immigrants were emerging better adapted and learning new skills to adjust to life in America more effectively than other group. Certainly, it was a time when these newcomers had to be creative and learn quickly if they were going to succeed. Furthermore Lederhendler suggests, this "unusual preponderance of Jewish immigrants who, upon their arrival America, claimed

²⁹⁷ Bissoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Penguin Books, Toronto, 1994. Page 220.

²⁹⁸ Lederhendler, Eli. *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class*. Cambridge University Press, N.Y., 2009. Page 40.

previous craft skills was most likely an exaggeration.”²⁹⁹ Whether this was done to ensure employment or at least a facade of a skilful person, it was probably a conscious choice. Whatever one did or wanted to do as an occupation, most immigrants tried to avoid starting out again from scratch, with relatively few social and material resources.³⁰⁰ It was necessary to learn quickly, falsify one’s skills or adapt oneself to whatever was available as if they had done the type of work for a lifetime.

Under circumstances of uncertainty and a poor economy, the situation for Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe must have been delicate when it came to finding work. Whether in Canada or the United States, most of these immigrants were poor, looked downtrodden, were often unskilled, and had difficulty speaking English. In consideration of the immigrant situation and the perception of Jews, Jewish philanthropic organizations were compelled to become involved. As pointed out by Marco Caselli who looked at Italian immigration issues, “it seems advisable, indeed indispensable to identify actors or organizations able to mediate between them.”³⁰¹ To address this, Caselli’s addressed the role of immigrant associations as a mediating factor in the context of a new social situation. Caselli points out that his study of Italian immigrants highlighted how through this social agency of associations - the integration process was more likely to be successful. In the case of Jewish immigrants, organizations such as the Industrial Removal Office and the Jewish Colonization Association did not play major roles in

²⁹⁹ Ibid. Page 42.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. Page 54.

³⁰¹ Caselli, Marco. “Integration, Participation, Identity: Immigrant Associations in the Province of Milan”. *International Migration*. Volume 48:2, April 2010. Page 59.

funding immigrants but rather served to help people find places to live and work. Whether it was for individual jobs in mid-western cities or placement into a farming colony in New Jersey, Jewish philanthropic groups served an important role in the relocation process. Even though the Jewish Colonization Association did provide funds, these monies were arranged as business “loans” rather than supportive cash.

In the case of Italian immigrants, community groups served as mediators toward the process of integration as mentioned by Caselli. As part of the task of helping the newcomers, Jewish philanthropic organization assumed the lead similar to the groups Caselli addressed. On a different level, some communities created smaller groups that functioned as regional or hometown associations that became known as “*landsmanschaften*” As a function of their existence, these groups provided a nostalgic atmosphere of the old country while also creating a network of mutual aid where none was available.³⁰² According to Irving Howe it was these “little organizations...that kept alive memories and helped them (newcomers) fit into the new world.”³⁰³ Although these groups had little to do with productivization per se, I mention them because such associations functioned as an outlet to connect the old world ways with the way things were in North America. Perhaps because of this, these groups provided what was a necessary connection to the past that supplied immigrants with a sense of security to move into the future. As Richard Alba, Albert Raboteau and Josh DeWind have written, because the strains of the immigration process were difficult, “the relationship to the homeland also is

³⁰² Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 94.

³⁰³ Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976. Page 184.

frequently taken up by systems of religious meaning.”³⁰⁴ In this context, the landsmanschaften group was a coping mechanism for the individual – while maintaining a foundation of the community that was a point of strength, the past was also part of the relationship.

Awareness of the potential negative consequences of mass immigration was an important concern for the local Jewish communities. With so many Jews arriving at one time, the growing concern with the anti-Jewish backlash seemed quite evident. The statistics from this period revealed and confirmed that “one third of the entire Jewish population immigrated to the United States over a fifty year period,” beginning around 1880.³⁰⁵ It was a period when “as much as 70 percent of the Jewish labour force must be considered the working poor.”^{ix} As such, there was hope that more jobs would open up in certain manufacturing sectors. Immigrants realized that “one did what one could, and there was no disgrace in doing anything... as long as he worked and made money and paid for everything.”³⁰⁶ The priority for Jewish immigrants was to attain the basics for survival – food, clothing and shelter. In the words of an editorial from “The Forward” published in 1916, “we have to be Americans. We will be... we will learn English. We will accommodate ourselves to the laws and organizations of the country...”³⁰⁷ This constituted a statement of commitment to becoming North American.

³⁰⁴ Alba, Richard, Raboteau, Albert J., and DeWind, Josh (Ed). *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative & Historical Perspectives*. New York University Press, N.Y. 2009. Page 7.

³⁰⁵ Lederhendler, Eli. *Jewish Immigrants and American Capitalism, 1880-1920: From Caste to Class*. Cambridge University Press, N.Y., 2009. Page 1

³⁰⁶ Ravage, Michael E. *An American in the Making*. Dover Books, New York, 1971. Page 86.

³⁰⁷ Zipperstein, Steven J. *Imagining Russian Jewry: Memory, History, Identity*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999. Page 20.

DEVELOPING A PSYCHOLOGY OF PRODUCTIVIZATION

As a window to the past and in an attempt to provide a perception of how both local and immigrant Jews were perceived in public opinion, I will examine newspapers from several important cities such as Galveston, New York, Toronto and Winnipeg during the years 1890 to 1920. As a glimpse into that era, I choose to explore the pages of these newspapers in order to provide an example of how Jews were discussed in public and if this information contributed to the perception of Jewish immigrants. For example, in the *New York Times* of November 1910, there is a feature that provides details as to how an organizations, the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society provided loans to Jewish farmers and individuals wanting to develop a larger industry. Highlighting how these activities were confined to one or two regions ten years earlier and currently they had expanded to “twenty States of the Union and in Canada.” Later in that same feature, it is written that “good work is being done by the Hebrew population,” suggesting an active engagement by the Jews with the local economy.³⁰⁸ As an example of the articles that could be found, this story reflects a community actively engaged in social as well as economic issues. It was one of many found, that provided a window to how Jews were seen as a growing public entity and to what extent they were portrayed in the media. More often than not, these newspaper stories conveyed a perception of some form of progress and an indication that Jews are attempting to build and change how they were seen in public. In this sense, I found that the newspapers I consulted, served two purposes - to become an instrument

³⁰⁸ *New York Times*, New York. March 6, 1910.

that will illustrate how Jews were presented to the general public and also to serve as a suggested model of social behavior.

Whether printed in Yiddish or English, the Jewish newspapers like the *Forward* (New York), *Keneder Adler* (Montreal) and the *Jewish Times* (Montreal) were another set of examples how the Jewish perspective was portrayed from a different viewpoint. In many ways these were very different newspapers and would benefit from a future comparative of the issues I was interested in. However, even though they represented different outlooks, they did provide a glimpse of a world that existed – not a perfect picture by any means, but a glance into a time that was. On many occasions, there were features and editorials designed to present important messages to the Jewish public that served as a learning device and a source of reflection of the Jewish image.

As an example of the role a Jewish newspaper can play, the efforts of David Rome who translated some of the work of Hirsch Wolofsky (the owner of Canada's first Yiddish Newspaper – *Keneder Odler, Montreal*), provides a glimpse into the mind of a community leader during a period of increased migration. Rome wrote "that Wolofsky had founded his newspaper in the hope of contributing significantly to the development of the community, and at the same time bring together energies dispersed by the worries of immigration and adaption to a new environment."³⁰⁹ Here David Rome illustrates how like Wolofsky, writers also presented their community agendas which directed the readers' attention to a particular situation. In some

³⁰⁹ Rome, David (Ed) and Anctil, Pierre. *Through the Eyes of the Eagle: The Early Montreal Yiddish Press 1907-1916*. Vehicule Press, Montreal, 2001. Page 31.

newspapers, there were some features where the approach was direct; presenting guidelines that detailed specifically how Jews were to behave in a gentile world. As I will soon describe in greater detail, these guidelines were intended to combat the negative perception of Jews many Gentile had learned, while presenting a strategy to change how the general public would see Jews. More importantly, on occasion these features focused on providing guidelines with respect to living within a non-Jewish world. Overall, these may have been decision not just to improve the image of the Jew, but simple helpful thoughts to aid the average newcomer to fit into North American society.

When it comes to this idea of improving the image of immigrant Jews after 1900, I found in an excellent example that was a regular feature in an early Canadian newspaper called *The Jewish Times*. Published in English in Montreal beginning in 1898, this paper was established to serve the growing Jewish community in the city. As part of their agenda, the management of this paper appeared to realize the importance of contributing to the improvement of the Jewish image in a feature known as “A Word About Ourselves”. Published as an irregular feature, the contents of this “column” conveyed an agenda to improve the skills of Jewish people in a non-Jewish environment. In addition to the usual content of what a daily newspaper would contain, this feature boasted that it served as an instruction guide for Jews living in a Gentiles world.

According to Gerald Tulchinsky (2008), *The Jewish Times* did not merely convey information for the sake of publishing news, but was also intended “to educate non-Jew and Jew alike in their perception of Jewish life in Canada.”³¹⁰ In addition to regular feature articles and news

stories, the paper attempted to convey an up-to-date review of the life and times of the Jewish world. What attracted my attention to this paper was this specific feature that was direct and detailed in its direction. As I explored the microfilms of this paper, I discovered that it usually appeared at the front of the paper, or in some rare instances in the mid section. It is obvious that its placement suggests a recognition of significance since it was not some obscure feature buried in the back section of the paper. Why this feature did not appear more regularly is uncertain. Over the years, these articles read like an instructional guide designed to provide the dos and don'ts of all kinds of social interactions. Whether it was one or several writers is unclear. However, the content or theme for each essay appears to emphasize the value of etiquette concerning how Jews should behave in public. At the same time, even though each installment illustrated the importance of proper behaviour, these guidelines were intended to guide the individual's behavior highlighting certain basic principles for living with other people who had different ways. In light of this, one might assume that the real goal was according to Simon Belkin - "to raise the prestige of the Jewish community throughout Canada and... to prove their value as citizens of a free society".³¹¹

In the October 28th, 1898 edition of the *Jewish Times*, this feature once again discussed the subject of how every person (Jew or Gentile) needs to be recognized primarily as a person based on their own merits as an individual and excluding consideration of their religion and

³¹⁰ Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 107.

³¹¹ Belkin, Simon. *Through Narrow Gates*. The Eagle Publishing Co., Montreal, 1966. Page 86

nationality.³¹² Throughout the article, there was a frequent emphasis on the importance of respecting other people regardless of their level of wealth or social status. From my understanding of the writer's perspective, the point was to remind members of the Jewish community to avoid becoming complacent about other people or situations. The point was to become a concerned citizen with regard to matters related to both Jews and Gentiles. According to the article, the future will be a time when there will be "less and less of slights put upon Jews, for they will have ceased to make themselves offensive."³¹³ In this case, the author is clearly implying that there are members of the Jewish upper class that are realistically not the best examples of Jewish behaviour. Very simply, that it was a theme that every Jew becomes a representative of what a Jew is like. That is, each Jew remains responsible for their own behavior reflecting not just their actions but the perception of what a Jew is like as well.

Looking back at these newspaper articles, I submit that this feature attempted to illustrate a specific point to the reader. With regard to one's behavior in public, there is example that illustrated how a particular Jewish person behaved disingenuously and did not respect the rights of a Gentile simply because of socio-economic status. According to the writer, who is anonymous, he emphasized that it is important for Jews to avoid being judgemental. Jews and for that matter people in general should treat others in the same manner they would like to be treated. Not only is it important to extend respect to others suggested the writer, but to keep in mind that principle how each Jew becomes a representative for all Jews. As suggested in the article, more often than not, people create a perception of others based on their experiences

³¹² *Jewish Times*. "A Word About Ourselves". Montreal, QC, October 28, 1898.

³¹³ Ibid.

with other people. Regardless of the rule to avoid generalizations, it is a human quality that this is often done.

With the increasing arrivals of many East European Jews to North America, it was important to set good examples for the newcomers to follow and avoid the occurrence of any kind of problematic situations. With the increasing number of newcomers more prevalent in certain cities in North America and many looking for work, how these people mixed into the regions where they settled was at time delicate. With the problem of anti-Semitism on the rise, becoming a responsible citizen was a priority as mentioned within the pages of the *Jewish Times*. Since only so much could be done to combat anti-Semitism, it was important to recognize that the perception of Jews especially during this period was under scrutiny. Even if the articles in the *Jewish Times* primarily addressed acculturated and well to do Jews, I would guess the idea was to get the message out there and was intended for all Jews to follow. It did not matter if a Jew was wealthy, part of the middle class or even poor; anti-Semitism affected all Jews. In such a situation, the task was to remain vigilant. History has taught Jewish communities that more often than not, the gentile population does not discriminate as to the kind of Jew one is - only that one is simply a Jew.

In the December 9, 1898 issue of the *Jewish Times*, "A Word About Ourselves" the writer attempted to illustrate how it was essential that non-Jewish citizens gain an understanding of Jews and Judaism. Referring to the *Jewish Times* as an important voice of the community, examples were given so as to illustrate how the paper can not only show Jews how to become responsible, but also, teach Jews how to become "good citizens and worthy of attention and

respect.”³¹⁴ Recognizing its responsibility as a source of knowledge, the paper began to include included a series of direct references to the contributions of Jews in general. The goal of these features covered the important contributions that were being made by other Jewish Canadians across the country to illustrate the progressive and contributive nature of the community overall. It was evidently hoped that this kind of discussion would serve as a model for the younger Jewish population.

In light of the previous examples, it seems that there were different mechanisms at work within the Jewish community that were engaged in activities to transform how Jews were seen in public seems reasonable. In one sense, these events and actions corroborate that there was a serious concern over the perceptions of both immigrant and to some extent established Jewish communities across North America. The end goal was the same. Through education, Jewish actions would curb the spread of anti-Jewish propaganda that could arise from problematic social conditions. By following such an agenda, it seems that in the case of the *Jewish Times* there was a *deliberate* attempt to emphasize the importance of a well balanced and responsible community. In other words, the paper became an “eye” on and for the community and voice of direction for the benefit of the community. Through stories on etiquette, personal triumph and the events within the Jewish community, the paper clearly served as a platform for enhancing the Jewish image. Actions of this nature suggest that it was more than just a reflection of a community, but it presented a model to follow. In a sense, it

³¹⁴ *Jewish Times*. “A Word About Ourselves”. Montreal, QC, December 9, 1898. Page 8.

embraced a methodology created to put emphasis on careful transformation of the Jewish image within a non-Jewish world.

In a last example of many, the *Jewish Times* of December 9th, 1900 contained a feature that highlighted its contribution to the success of the great influx of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. The author of the article states with pride that it has been demonstrated “to the entire satisfaction of the government and people of this country (Canada) that the Jews are not an undesirable class of settlers.”³¹⁵ As in other editions of this paper, the accomplishments and contributions of Jews in Canada are frequently mentioned with pride. Although there may have been concern regarding intensive immigration, Jewish people continuously worked hard to build the new country they were calling their new home. Whether in this or other articles, the theme that Jewish people did not simply use and take advantage, they but should be considered equal partners contributing to a strong country. Years later in a similar newspaper feature, the author repeats this same mantra and records the efforts of the paper to creatively educate and contribute to the “respectability and law abiding character of our people.”³¹⁶ In a time when publicity agents were just beginning to learn the art of promotion, the *Jewish Times* was well on its way to recognizing the value of community relations. Whether or not the editorial staff of that paper realized the broad implications of such a direction is difficult to ascertain at this time. Regardless, the paper actions speak volumes regarding its intention.

³¹⁵ *Jewish Times*. “A Word About Ourselves”. Montreal, QC, December 9, 1900. Page 9.

³¹⁶ *Jewish Times*. “A Word About Ourselves”. Montreal, QC, March 27, 1903. Page 136.

In addition to the example of the *Jewish Times*, organizations such as the Jewish Colonization Association and the Industrial Removal Organization also attempted to influence the perception of Jewish immigrants. Public activities such as the creation of training programs and community groups served not just to provide a needed service but maintained a concern to contribute to helping East European Jews adjust to a different world and the demands it presented. During the turn of the 19th century, these activities constituted a series of educational services such as the “Free School”, specific occupational training programs, as well as much needed English courses. On one level, these options provided necessary assistance to many immigrants, providing them with support and some kind of direction. At the same time, these services were also an opportunity to guide the newcomers in a direction of behavioral enhancement – that was to help people learn ways to adjust to new social conditions that were considerably different than what they may have experienced previously.

Of the many Jewish clubs and associations that emerged during this period, I found that there was one organization that embraced the specific theme of transforming the perception of the Jews in a distinctive manner. It was called the “New Era Club” and it was situated in New York City. Although there were other clubs or associations in existence at the time, most of these venues were created to be places to meet. However, the New Era Club was somewhat different and sought more comprehensive change. Besides functioning as a social outlet for activities, the leadership of the club attempted to contribute to a whole new image of what a Jew was and should be. Because of this, there was an emphasis on modernization and transformation of what a Jew was to becoming more like an American.

Initiated as a social club, this outlet for local Jews and newcomers emerged because of the need for “wholesome recreation” for young men in New York City. In one source, it was mentioned that the club was organized around 1900, as an attempt to Americanize Jews according to author Samuel Joseph. On another level, it was a place for meeting people while offering entertainment, billiards, lectures and an assortment of educational activities to help enhance the quality of life.³¹⁷ According to the “Report of the New Era Club” for the year ending 1902, it seems that the Club was actually organized the following year in October, 1901 as membership was becoming more popular and increasing rapidly. With facilities furnished by a number of private donors, the club was “deemed necessary owing to the fact that opportunities for wholesome recreation for young men did not exist.”³¹⁸ It was a place where organizers felt confident of the positive consequences and something that would contribute to strengthening the community and setting standards for a responsible membership. More importantly, it was seen as an important outlet for meeting others and enhancing one’s character through “wholesome” activities.

As a novelty, the New Era Club became popular with “the membership made up for the most part of Jewish young men of the east side between the ages of 18 and 25...”.³¹⁹ The qualifications for membership were simple, “the applicant must be of good character after

³¹⁷ Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund: The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 271.

³¹⁸ Wolborst, L. “Report of the New ERA Club”. New York. January 1, 1903. YIVO Collection, ID # 1-80 – AJHS Collection.

³¹⁹ *New York Times*, New York. November 29, 1901.

being admitted..." with monthly dues of twenty-five cents.³²⁰ Providing suitable means of recreation, the President of the club Dr. A. L. Wolborst described the facility as "the most powerful single instrument for the up-building of manly character that has not been offered young men anywhere in our city..."³²¹ In his 2nd annual report, Dr. Wolborst mentioned that the New Era Club was not a "reformatory" or "settlement" club, but rather an association properly governed by a group of respectable individuals who under their leadership are awaking the spirits of young men to "realize that they owe an important duty to themselves and to their neighbourhood."³²² These were admirable qualities to instil within a young man to help him emerge as respectable and committed to the community. With religion playing a minor role and more emphasis on social and cultural responsibilities, the New Era Club had an agenda to "Americanize" the young Jewish men of New York and the region to become like other young Americans. When it came to the commemorating and observing Jewish holidays, the club attempted to maintain "loyalty to old ideals, and a profound reverence for our people and our faith."³²³ Jewish holidays and ideas were recognized and maintained. However, these holidays began to play less and less of a role as the emphasis was placed on more on secular activities. Although the Jewish character remained present in the club, emphasis was placed on becoming good Americans and following the America Lifestyle.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Wolborst, L. "Report of the New ERA Club". New York. January 1, 1903. YIVO Collection, ID # 1-80 – AJHS Collection.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

Highlighting the secular dimension and building a strong American character was a theme mentioned in the yearly report for 1902. In the words of Dr. Wolborst, all these young people, “need is the force of a good example.”³²⁴ With facilities for recreational activities such as billiards, an extensive library, a gymnasium with weight training equipment, dances and educational events, the membership skyrocketed.³²⁵ In time, the club’s weekly gatherings attracted more and more young men, who brought their sisters and girlfriends. Thus the club was attempting to develop - “unconsciously, a higher mutual regard of the sexes...”³²⁶ With all the services and opportunities that this organization represented, the outcome of this important social undertaking was designed to affect future generations - “namely the self-development of men and character.”³²⁷ For its promoters, the club was a great idea for improving the American Jew; especially the younger generation that was learning how to join American society. For some, it was a perfect social outlet and the ideal mechanism to produce a completely new Jewish person. To this extent, it has been suggested that the club contributed to the creation of a more westernized person who fit into the greater community, rather than live outside within a sub-population – hence the name, “new ERA club”. In this sense, it was an association that was contributing to a new period and a better world.

The New ERA club was probably inspired by the Settlement House movement which began across the United States in the 1890’s. Originally, these Settlement Houses were known for

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ *New York Times, New York*. November 29, 1901.

³²⁶ Wolborst, L. “Report of the New ERA Club”. New York. January 1, 1903. YIVO Collection, ID # 1-80 – AJHS Collection.

³²⁷ Ibid.

helping immigrants adjust to their new environment and preserve the traditions of the old country...“assuring immigrants that it was not necessary to reject the past to become Americans,” wrote Allen Davis.³²⁸ Later research by Rivka Lissak revised the thinking about these settlement houses, revealing that “assimilation of the immigrants was the settlement houses ultimate goal,” while the celebration of the newcomers background was secondary to the process of Americanization.³²⁹ Later according to Alissa Schwartz, the settlement house changed and became more of a place for immigrants to socialize, receive medical care and education, while adjusting to life in their adopted homeland. Gradually these places promoted secularity over religious tradition and ultimately contributed to the development of a new identity for Jews immigrants arriving in the United States, that of the “American” Jew. In the end, it was this idea of becoming like everyone else that often served as the goal for the immigrant population. It is no surprise that local Jews were also absorbed by this movement. From all the examples previously mentioned and the different tactics undertaken to transform the Jewish population to become more modern, in the end tried to achieve the same goal – that was, to fit in.

Scholarly publication after publication have attempted address the historic hatred of Jews that flares up in certain times and regions. There have always been theories, explanations and reasons for anti-Semitism none of which have emerged that has provided a comprehensive explanation leading to some form of solution. Beginning in the late 1700’s, the idea known as

³²⁸ Rose, Elizabeth. “From Sponge cake to ‘Hamentashen’: Jewish Identity in a Jewish Settlement House, 1885-1952”, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Volume 13:3, Spring 1994. Page 3.

³²⁹ Ibid.

productivization has been discussed as a strategy that emerged to minimize anti-Semitic feelings. Even though it may have been suggested that productivization was a response to combat anti-Semitism directly, I think it was more of a tactic to transform the society.

Within this context, the productivization of Jewish immigrants clearly became a task to place Jewish people more within a society, rather than accepting their presence living on the outside boundaries. In accepting this change in position, transforming the Jew through productivity enhances the proximity of Jews to other citizens - experiencing life as other non-Jews lived. Surely there were differences that existed and would continue to exist between Jews and non-Jews. However, productivization was intended to create more of an equilibrium or harmonization of the overall population. Having said this, it would be this design that would eventually establish an improved social equilibrium where there was none before.

Prior to World War I, the flow of East Europeans highlighted the need for some Jewish philanthropic organizations to address the need to integrate a population of Jewish immigrants into North American society. For these organizations, the methodology of productivization provided a lucrative “road map” as how to best introduce a group of newcomers into an environment that required a major adjustment. After having functioned as a population comprised of certain membership, the increasing number of immigrants, including Jews had to address this new unbalance. If this imbalance was going to change, it would seem that a significant “make over” would be necessary to establish a more balanced community.

Conclusion

Productivization was a term that I had come across frequently in my studies of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe. As I surveyed this period and the intensive movement of Jews to North America between 1880 and 1920, the term productivization seemed to emerge within this narrative. Often associated with activities initiated to better integrate a Jewish population within a larger Gentile society, these situations occurred in regions where the Jewish population was disadvantaged and had minimal economic strength. Historically, all efforts at productivization were not only an attempt to improve the economic situation, but at the same time to influence the perception of the Jews as a group or individuals. For some, it was a mechanism that attempted to enhance or improve the opinion of the local non-Jewish population that Jews could be more productive than they were thought to be like. In his discussion on helping the East European Jews in North America, Derek Penslar reminds us of the words of Gustav Tuch, who wrote that: "Insofar as America's and Western Europe's Jews engage in rescue work...., they also worked for the benefit of their own reputation."³³⁰ In other words, this concern extended past the perception of the newcomers and included the existing Jewish population as well. In reality, it could be said, that for some philanthropists on occasion their activities might be influenced by self-interest and not only for the beneficiaries of their actions. Although their public concern was the influx of thousands of Jewish immigrants, my

³³⁰ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 178.

research seems to point to a great apprehension with regard to how these immigrants would work their way into North American society.

As I pursued these issues, I found that Jewish communities have always assisted their brethren in times of need. Productivization was simply another method that conveyed the idea that helping others was a good reflection on the helper. This meant that the task of helping the less fortunate population enhanced the image of those that were helpers as well the greater community that the helpers represented. As David Vital wrote: “the appearance of great numbers of impoverished, oddly dressed, uncouth, and, above all, foreign Jews... was a profoundly unsettling phenomenon for the great majority of indigenous Jews...”.³³¹ Therefore, this troubling factor only added pressure to a worrisome situation. It was a common fear with which many within the North American Jewish establishment were preoccupied as the number of immigrants increased. Some contemporary observers have commented that the anxiousness that existed was explosive, the creative actions taken reduced the magnitude of the tension. As they responded to the question, “whether they could be accepted and integrated into that society socially and culturally...”³³² If a solution did exist, David Vital said “it had to be invented afresh”.³³³ No doubt any solution had to be successful both for the newcomers and the pre-existing community. It would also have to be a solution that took into account the economic times and what would be necessary to make the transition successful.

³³¹ Vital, David. *The Origins of Zionism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1975. Page 209.

³³² Ibid. Page 203.

³³³ Ibid. 208.

Productivization was a strategy that involved creating a situation in which those involved were actively engaged in producing something of importance. According to contemporary scholar Jack Glazier, “Jewish organizations had no choice but to persist in their efforts to ameliorate the poverty of the newcomers and to facilitate their adjustment...”³³⁴ The impact on the existing community was clearly evident in big North American cities such as New York, Boston, Montreal and Toronto. As an example, farming was portrayed at the time as being productive and a vital component of the society. As such, placing a portion of the immigrants into agriculture added this productive component as well as providing an outlet for the improvement of society. In this way, the notion of productivization served first to change the perception of the newcomers and to indicate how these newcomers were involved in industrious activity that had wider implications. Since most newcomers were arriving from a life of poverty and limitations, many local Jewish communities felt they had no choice but to respond in this manner.

As the great wave of Jewish immigrants began to increase in the 1890s, Jewish philanthropic agencies active both in Europe and North America attempted to prepare programs for the placement of these immigrants. In 1891 the Jewish Alliance of America, considering the situation, recommended that there should more sensitivity to non-Jewish opinion. I believe as written by Joseph Brandes that these organizations “let the immigrants become farmers and

³³⁴ Glazier, Jack. *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 38.

make thereby the most effectual step to stamp out prejudice against the Jew.”³³⁵ Aware of conditions that existed in Eastern Europe and how many Jews were affected by them, Jewish organizations had to work with what had been considered the best option for a portion of the immigrants. Even though it was expected that the Jewish immigrants would have a difficult time adjusting to life in the West, finding work within the farming industry had many advantages. Given this heightened concern, my research revealed how this profound anxiety on the part of the settled Jewish population influenced the way Jewish immigrants were infused in to North America society.

Although there was no “official” policy or strategic plan to address this concern, there were enough independent initiatives and commentaries that revealed across the board fear of what could occur if the means of integration were disorganized and not attended to. In an article written by Joseph Brandes titled “Jewish Charity versus Agriculture”, he quotes Bernard Palitz as saying “the energies of the immigrant must be directed, not to the petty trades, not to the push-carts, or the pack on the shoulders, not to the tailor shop, but to the health giving, ennobling, invigorating and plenteous farm life.”³³⁶ Unorganized placement or no placement at all, would in this view only lead to problematic conditions. For many scholars past and present, it was quite important to present this positive image of the Jewish immigrants as productive people, rather than vagrants looking for handouts. Recognizing this undercurrent, certain philanthropic organizations involved with the placement of Jewish immigrants developed a

³³⁵ Brandes, Joseph. *Immigrants To Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey Since 1882*. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1971. Page 29.

³³⁶ Ibid. Page 44.

strategy to handle what they expected to be a difficult series of events. Since one can only speculate how the leadership felt, it seemed that if this matter was unaddressed, it was clear to them that the dangers of anti-Semitic rhetoric across North America would increase as a consequence. Even though there were a number of anti-Semitic occurrences as the number of Jewish immigrants increased, these occurrences could have been amplified if the social conditions detonated in those explosive times.

Initially, these early concerns and creative discussions on the movement of Eastern European Jews emanated from people like Rabbi Ludwig Phillipson, Michael Heilprin and the Baron de Hirsch. Even though the range of their ideas and suggestions differed, their thoughts converged with regard to plans that would re-settle the immigrant population in family farming communities across North America. In his time, Rabbi Phillipson argued that the only remedy for the Russian Jews was emigration, in other words an exodus from Russia.³³⁷ He believed that it was necessary for Jews to live in a place that was untilled and uncultivated with good farming conditions. As previously illustrated, Phillipson expressed the idea that the land offered “precious gifts” and that these gifts included freedom of movement, unrestricted utilization of energy, freedom of conscience and a place where Jewish people could begin a new life.³³⁸ It was a 19th century vision that encompassed not just a plan of action, but an underlying agenda as to how Jews were to be presented – a strategy that recognized the past events and how Jews lived across Europe for centuries.

³³⁷ Shargel, Norton David. *Lugwig Philippson: The Rabbi as Journalist – An Anthology of his Writings with an Introductory Essay*. Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1990. Two Volumes. Page 519.

³³⁸ Ibid. Page 523.

Even though this was one model, most Jewish organizations after Rabbi Phillipson appreciated the involvement in agriculture; they were also well aware of the consequences of overcrowding and the increasing numbers of refugees in one place. This realization was compounded by the reality of congestion building within immigrant neighbourhoods in New York City that were indeed problematic physically and morally. According to Thomas Kessner “while other groups held their offspring firmly to the old ways, the Eastern Europeans did not pass on the moral norms of their past. Instead they passed their children on to America”.³³⁹ There was a desire to be like others; in other words a consciousness of change leading away from the past to a new future; It was as if the East European Jews, “possessed a number of traits that enabled them rapidly to identify themselves as American through consumption: the motivation to settle in America rather than repatriate, the transplantation of families... running like a thread through the experience of cultural adaptation, a unique perspective on the inspirational capacity of material luxuries.”³⁴⁰ Since anti-Semitism was on the rise, the idea of becoming Americanized flourished. Whether this could be a safe guard against anti-Semitism, to find work, or avoiding any kind of economic crisis, the idea of fitting in was absorbing many options and possibilities.

In light of these concerns, the ideas presented in this dissertation, were creative responses that addressed the influx of East European Jewish immigrants by one or more philanthropic organizations. Even though there was no official body that adopted outright the ideology of

³³⁹ Berger, David. *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and its impact*. Atlantic Research and Publication, N.Y. 1983. Page 177.

³⁴⁰ Heinze, Andrew R. *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Communication and the Search for American Identity*. Columbia University Press, New York, 1990. Page 222.

productivization, I consider it to be an important element of how these immigrants were settled into North American society. In the course of this research, I have attempted to argue that productivization was influential as an ideology and was used as a methodology. Through the activities of certain Jewish philanthropic groups, immigrants were redirected into situations that would not only influence what they did but how they would appear to the non-Jewish population. Thomas Kessner expresses it best by saying that the East European Jewish population began to focus its efforts toward “achieving the security that had so often eluded them, as many Jews negotiated the transition to a new life by accepting the goals of adaptation to American ways”.³⁴¹ Through the assistance of several Jewish agencies, the newcomers were at times part of situations that made them appear productive, engaging, creative, valuable, practical, positive, and useful. Their efforts at times were conscious of the conditions and attempted to deflect the negative perceptions of Jews – as poor, underprivileged and having no skills. For some Jewish agencies, it was important to reconstruct the public perception of Jewish immigrants by providing both aid and support as a means to elevate their situation away from the problematic.

Prior to the increasing flow of immigrants to North America, certain philanthropic groups in France, England and North America initially supported efforts to relocate some Jewish families on small farming settlements scattered in parts of North and South America. Since there were still a number of problematic conditions early on, such as poor communications, inexperience, financial arrangements, logistical and weather issues, the relocation of people on farms

³⁴¹ Ibid. Page 176.

consistently encountered difficulties that delayed any kind of success. In time, these problems were addressed with some success and certain farming settlements began to move forward for a period of time. According to Joseph Brandes, the Jewish colonists “were made to feel that they were not merely working for themselves but rather for the cause of proving that Jews could be farmers.”³⁴² Although it was a very long road from life in Russia to the farms of North America, Joseph Brandes asserts that to some extent the East Europeans “proved that Jews could be farmers.”³⁴³ Some scholars looking at this period have looked beyond the general perception of farming programs as a failure both in Canada and the United States of America. However, I have found that there is an absence of discussion exploring how relocating immigrants to farms was a beginning for certain Jews and had more of a positive effect on the community. As a result, it seems most scholars do not address this area in great detail and basically indicate that there is little recognition of the contributions of these farming settlements. This being the case, is it possible to measure whether or not Jewish farming was helpful at the time? If we base our data on the long term achievements of the placement of immigrants on farms or on the fact that that hundreds of Jews successfully started something from nothing – it would appear that this program was successful in a general sense.

In hindsight, even though numerous problems were associated with the task of becoming a farmer, people expressed confidence at the time that this was the best option for the East European Jews. As I have illustrated, the depiction of Jews as farmers carried a message that

³⁴² Brandes, Joseph. *Immigrants To Freedom: Jewish Communities in Rural New Jersey Since 1882*. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1971. Page 86.

³⁴³ Ibid. Page 92.

these immigrants were hard working people actually contributing to society. Consider the article in the *New York Times* of June 5th, 1905, The American Banker Jacob H. Schiff is quoted as saying, “we hail you young men and your successors, the Jewish farmers of today and tomorrow... You are contributing to save the modern Jew from a dangerous situation.”³⁴⁴ It is a comment of both concern and at the same time appreciation. Later in that same article, Schiff went on to express the value of the Jewish farmer and the profession of agriculture as the industry of the future – acknowledging that as more immigrants arrive, they will find their place on the farm and build a new life from this. I see this as an acknowledgement that becoming farmers in North America provided an opportunity for hope and celebration. It was a confirmation that the future was looking better and better.

In the course of this research, I have found that newspaper articles were an important source for learning about the public presentation of an ethnic group. In addition to revealing details such as the life as a farmer, there were other messages embedded within these articles that related to Jews in general. Looking at the content in a story, a reader might get a sense that Jewish immigrants were both hard workers and would risk their own personal well-being as they headed out to the unknown western frontier. Here, I refer to an article that appeared in the *New York Times* of March 6th, 1910. In this feature, the writer indicated how many Jews were becoming involved in agriculture and the possibilities that could result in time from such an involvement. Under the guidance of an early philanthropic group in the United States known as the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, the writer mentions how loans of \$141,000

³⁴⁴ *New York Times*, New York. June 5, 1905.

were provided to 311 Jewish farmers in parts of North America. Further to this, it was also revealed that this information was “intended as a reply to those who allege that the Jew and more particularly the Jewish immigrant in the United States, objects to the hard manual labour involved in agriculture pursuits.”³⁴⁵ Accordingly, this reference was intended to emphasize how hard working the Jewish immigrants were and the difficulties they encountered. More importantly, it was a message to the reader that Jewish people, especially the immigrants, were hard working people, as opposed to the social myth that asserted that Jews avoided hard physical work.

Recognizing that not all Jewish immigrants were farmers, we nonetheless find the expression of the opinion that Jews were hard working people as opposed to false perceptions and stereotypes.. Writing over one hundred years later, Jonathan Dekel-Chen and Israel Bartal remind us that during this period, “the visionaries and builders of organized colonization were invested in transforming Jews into self-sufficient agriculturalists, both in practice and the associated imagery.”³⁴⁶ This was a period when Jewish immigrants were moving across unknown frontiers that were exceptionally dangerous and were determined to rebuild what was lost. Risking their lives and struggling to survive was behavior that sent a positive message that the Jews were hard working people. In addition to presenting farming as a builder of character, it was also a filter for those that were better off in a line of work outside of agriculture. In some sense, farming was more than an option. For some, it was a way for

³⁴⁵ *New York Times*, New York. March 6, 1910.

³⁴⁶ Dekel-Chen, Jonathan and Bartal, Israel. “Jewish Agrarianization”. *Jewish History*, 2007, 21. Page 241.

working immigrants to find their way into a community or a precursor to something more in line with their specific talents or skills.

In addition to the role of farming as a means of transition and influencing the perception of newly arrived Jews, there was another situation that addressed improving the perception of immigrant Jews around 1907. The Galveston Movement began as a co-operative effort between the American Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau and the Jewish Territorial Organization. After these agreements were worked out, the philanthropic groups created a partnership to help refugees from Eastern Europe come to the United States. What made this association unique was that they attempted to relieve the pressure caused by the overflow of people to certain east coast entry ports to the United States, mainly New York City. As a means to redirect some of the overflowing number of refugees, "the Galveston route would take them away from the crowded quarters to a part of the country in which opportunity was still knocking at everyman's door."³⁴⁷ With such a reduction in the number of immigrants on the east coast, the Galveston movement would provide greater opportunities in different ways. As a result, there would be greater access to work and settlement for the Jewish immigrants in the western regions of the United States. Conceived more as a way to better address overcrowding, The Galveston project tried to offer opportunities in the mid- west and western regions where little effort had been made previously.

Although there were minor issues, only a few serious problems were reported during its existence. The public perception of the people arriving in Galveston was considerably better

³⁴⁷ *New York Times*. New York. May 31, 1914.

than for those arriving in New York. With the trip to Galveston actually taking longer, passengers arriving at this southern port considered this route to be better for one's health. David Bressler, who was the head of the Industrial Removal Office at the time, wrote that the Galveston movement was "essentially an experiment in human dynamics, a shifting of environments to release the industrial and spiritual potencies of oppressed men and women."³⁴⁸ In Galveston, people entering the United States were sent into areas that were not over-populated with Jews and were more isolated than those arriving in the eastern ports. These newcomers settled in regions with greater opportunities and did not have any supplementary support like New York City. Since American laws at the time restricted the payment of funds for immigration to the United States, the Galveston movement refrained from soliciting or providing supportive funds to promote this re-settlement.

Galveston lasted seven years, and "ten thousand immigrants disembarked at the Texas port and fanned out west."³⁴⁹ Consequently, these immigrants were undoubtedly relocated in regions that were more appealing to new settlers. Since this distribution network successfully placed the newcomers in an assortment of jobs, Galveston did not contribute to the concerns of those who felt that the East European immigrants could become a source of social controversy. In fact, the immigrants who did arrive in Galveston would eventually become "exemplary citizens contributing productively to their adopted country," in the recent opinion

³⁴⁸ Glazier, Jack. *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 60.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

of Jack Glazier.³⁵⁰ This was a desired conclusion of successful integration and a welcome deterrent to what many worried would be the fomenting of anti-Semitism.

Prior to the North American part of the story, it was important to reflect on a small group of wealthy Russian Jews in St. Petersburg (Russia) who were concerned about the exodus of their fellow countrymen. According to Israel Bartal, it was a period in which “the attitude toward the Jewish population was complex and varied from one region to another and one ethnic group to another.”³⁵¹ Depending on the region, the relationship between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors varied from a volatile situation to one of tolerance. Aware of these circumstances throughout Eastern Europe, the St. Petersburg group adopted a strategy that they believed would curb the flow of Jews leaving for the West. Intending to address the concerns of their brethren, these philanthropists in Russia focused on changing the circumstances for Jews in a region that had a long history of persecuting Jews. Using as their model a program based on providing training and education, this small undertaking in Russia contained the same ideas embedded in the concept of productivization. Searching to improve the economic position of the Jews in Russia, this group believed a solution could be found in creating occupational training centres and general education facilities. Overall, the direction was to try and place more of the Jews in a better position to integrate them into Russian society.

³⁵⁰ Ibid. Page 61.

³⁵¹ Bartal, Israel. *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2005. Page 134.

The situation in Russia was complex especially because Imperial Russian officials had opposing opinions on how to relate to Jews. "One tendency was to integrate the Jews into Russian society... the other was to reject, alienate, or even oust this foreign insular population from the Russian Empire, or at the very best to distance them as far as possible from the centers of economic and cultural activity."³⁵² For some Russians, the Jews, since they had been associated with the Polish landowners, were perceived as self interested foreigners, living off the backs of the general population. Believing this, some Russians assumed that the Jews were promoting their own agenda for the spread of Jewish economic domination. Israel Bartal attributes "the rise of manifestations of hatred toward them" to this attitude.³⁵³ With all of this background history prior to the beginning of the great migration, perhaps simple education and training would not be sufficient to improve the situation for Russian Jews.

The relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Russia created an explosive situation which no doubt triggered the departure of many Jews. Even with only a small number of Jews involved in economic life, the myth flourished throughout the land that all Jews living in Russia desired economic superiority and were at the root of the country's troubles. It seems that such a belief and all associated with it fuelled anti-Semitism and the negative perception of Jews "had a strong impact on Russian public opinion."³⁵⁴ As a result of this situation, it is no surprise that Jewish philanthropists in Russia began to organize so as to counter this trend by transforming the Jewish population. Even though there was little chance of success, Russian

³⁵² Ibid. Page 134.

³⁵³ Ibid. Page 135.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. Page 136.

philanthropists created numerous projects that they hoped could influence the social conditions of opposition to Jews.

As discussed in the literature, the Jewish philanthropists believed that their goal was to help Jews become more productive and join together with their fellow Russians to build a strong economic system. At the same time, they wished to further opportunities of “enlightenment among the Jews, and encouraged young people” to pursue higher educational objectives.³⁵⁵

Philanthropic organizations known as OPE (Obshchestvo dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mexhdu evreiami v Rossii - Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment) and ORT (Vremennyi Komitet Obshchestva remeslennogo i zemledel’ cheskogo truda sredi evreev v Rossii - Provisional Committee for the Establishment of a Society for Handicrafts and Agricultural Work among the Jews of Russia), believed that educating and training mainly young Jews would be the best mechanism to strengthen and maintain the Jewish community in the Russian homeland. It was hoped that moving in this direction would somehow diminish the attitudes of the past and contribute to a future of greater cooperation and social progress.

Adopting measures that were sometimes misinterpreted by the Jewish community and referred to as “Russification”, these Jewish philanthropists thought of their involvement as a means to bring more Jews into Russian society. It was hoped that this form of change would also positively influence the perception of Jews that had resonated throughout Eastern Europe for many years. For these Russian Jewish philanthropists, the end goal was to empower the

³⁵⁵ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 32.

Jewish population with the knowledge and skills that could change and improve the role of Jews within Russian society. Despite these changes, there was still great reluctance to accept Jews as equals by the non-Jewish population. Not surprisingly, this home grown anti-Semitism across the land had produced many myths and accusations about Jews that continued as more and more Jews crowded into the Pale of Settlement. Throughout this period, the activities of the Russian press became one contributing factor promoting anti-Jewish thinking and probably contributed to later manifestations after 1880. It seemed that whatever advances these Jewish philanthropists made, the results would be sabotaged by the Russian media.

Regardless of the wonderful and well thought out educational training projects suggested by OPE and ORT, the anti-Jewish attitude was not going to disappear so quickly. Whether it was initiated by the Russian media or by individual provocateurs, Jewish organizations were looked upon with suspicion by the Imperial leadership and the general Gentile population. Then there was the activity of Jacob Brafman. Originally Jewish, Brafman claimed that OPE was “part of an international Jewish conspiracy supposedly linked to the worldwide activity of the French Alliance Israelite Universelle.”³⁵⁶ This was one aspect of many versions of a world-wide Jewish conspiracy to control the world through economic activities. It is these ideas that contributed to publications such as the “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion”, a book that was originated by a former Russian newspaper correspondent, and contained comments like, “Russia is conquered and brought to the ground... by taking their property... their gold, we have

³⁵⁶ Ibid. Page 138.

reduced this people to helpless slaves..."³⁵⁷ Publications of this nature not only instilled suspicion and apprehension throughout Eastern Europe – it contributed to promoting unsubstantiated fear in the Jewish population since their actions were constantly under the scrutiny of the Russian government and local officials.

During the beginnings of these philanthropic efforts in Russia, times were unfavourable for anything that would result in the betterment of the Jewish condition. In the late 19th century, even as ORT attempted to address the needs of Russian Jewry through productivization, many of their efforts were limited. Despite their simple goal to improve opportunities for Jews and to enhance their abilities to function economically and socially, a hostile environment persisted. Since OPE's survival was short lived, it seemed that their activities were for nothing. However, as Brian Horowitz concludes, "OPE played a formative role in shaping attitudes, formulating identity, and changing Jewish self-awareness... (and) the adoption of this identity offered potential solutions to the problems of assimilation and indifference to Judaism..."³⁵⁸ Strangely, what may have appeared as a failure, at times actually contained the seeds of success for future settlers, elsewhere. Although outside the parameters of this research, one wonders whether these early efforts may have been instrumental in the role of Jews later on in the 1920's, as communism appeared on one level to be more inclusive of Jews. In the last chapter, I presented the argument that through social instruments or teaching devices, Jewish community groups in

³⁵⁷ Marsden, Victor E.(Trans) *The Protocols of Zion*. Publisher unknown, 1934. Page 298.

³⁵⁸ Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 2009. Page 227.

the West conveyed valuable lessons for the transition process. Even though the established North American Jews had few commonalities with the newcomers, “they created a variety of institutions, such as settlement houses, to assist and ‘uplift’ the immigrants intending...to mould the newcomers according to a German Jewish notion of what a good American should be...”³⁵⁹ One example of such an institution was known as the New ERA Club, founded in New York City. It was evident that this organization was intended to encourage a specific behaviour model and lifestyle guidelines to benefit the membership; it was an association that was seen as something that could be used to contribute to the transformation of the Jewish image in the public’s eye.

Like similar social organizations that flourished throughout North America at that time, the New Era Club in New York gradually became an important centre for local and immigrant Jews to associate, partake in recreation, social events, charities, etc. Also of importance was the fact that even though these organizations were “Jewish”, they functioned in a similar manner to clubs founded within the Gentile community. Building upon the Americanization of immigrants, the New ERA club “offered industrial activities, there were lectures, classes in English, ethics and dancing, mothers’ meetings, an Improvement Club... facilities similar to those in better settlement houses.”³⁶⁰ In this respect, the New Era Club and other similar groups emerged as a mechanism for Jews to become more like the average American. To some degree, North

³⁵⁹ Rockaway, Robert A. *Words of the Uprooted*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 205.

³⁶⁰ Joseph, Samuel. *History of the Baron de Hirsch Fund – The Americanization of the Jewish Immigrant*. Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, Fairfield, N.J. 1978. Page 274.

American Jews – newcomers included-- were becoming more like the non-Jewish population, simply trying to blend in while letting what they were fade away. Perhaps this is what Robert A. Rockaway meant when he points out that the East European Jews “worried less about their Jewish identity and what the Gentiles thought and more about earning a living and getting established.”³⁶¹ Maybe it was a little of both.

In addition to the community associations or clubs, the newspaper was gradually becoming an important instrument of education and community expression. Even though not everyone could fully participate, the acquisition of information would become a significant means of communication for the evolving community. Once again the value associated to the perception of these newcomers was at the top of the list. An example of this was found in a local newspaper that served as an educational tool and a means to transform the community. *The Jewish Times*, published in Montreal, there was a regular feature designed to address how Jews could better integrate into their new life in North America. Like other small Jewish papers at the time, this newspaper tried to serve local community and in some cases other cities across North America. Throughout its existence, the management of the *Jewish Times* maintained an editorial aspiration to educate the average Jewish person. Perhaps for this reason, certain features were created and maintained to serve this purpose. In addition to news and local events, the paper offered a unique semi-regular personal feature called “As Others See Us”. Appearing as an irregular installment, the writer of this feature aimed “to educate non-Jews

³⁶¹ Rockaway, Robert A. *Words of the Uprooted*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 207

and Jew alike in their perception of Jewish life in Canada.”³⁶² Whether it was to provide advice on a number of topics; such as how Jews should behave in public, adjust their lifestyle, and participate in their newly adopted homeland – the articles were structured as a self help feature. For the non-Jews, the goal was to educate this population helping them understand the issues confronting the Jewish community. At times, there was even discussion how the Jews should join together and “should do all in their power to prevent the formation of a Ghetto in this city by inducing Jews to spread out.”³⁶³ These were issues that faced the community at the time and, that would influence how Jews were seen in public.

Whether using specific examples or possible scenarios of the times, these articles discussed the pros and cons of a situation followed by a few suggestions pointing the reader in the best possible direction. Although it was a simple feature that provided a strategy to instruct the population on the best ways to function in certain social situations, its potential to educate was enormous. Much more than simply providing help in addressing certain social concerns, this feature addressed specific fears and apprehensions confronting the Jewish population at the time. More importantly, it was a form of communication that attempted to present a model for Jews to learn about both themselves and at the same time the way the Gentile world works. From the articles I relied upon, the writers attempted to present the essential issues and possible option when dealing with its realities of life at the time.

³⁶² Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 2008. Page 107.

³⁶³ Ibid. Page 108.

Improving how a group of newcomers could better integrate into a community through the actions of a newspaper feature reflects a mechanism of change and something associated with the idea of productivization. From the onset, Jewish organizations tried to be helpful as they provided not just services or specific instructions for the East European Jews arriving in North America, but also a strategy so that these newcomers could flourish in the day to day realities of a New World. Clearly, the established Jewish population in North America was concerned about the newcomers and apprehensive whether they could adjust to their new surroundings and way of living. North American Jews, according to Robert A. Rockaway, “lived in terror that the mad act of some lunatic Jewish anarchist would destroy everything they had built”.³⁶⁴ As the number of newcomers continued increasing, the anxiety intensified and success was uncertain. Providing the basics was not enough to resolve the issues confronting immigrants such as finding work, health care and schooling for children. Their level of participation, familiarization and resourcefulness, all contributed to their successful integration into the western world. It is important to remember that the people who arrived from Eastern Europe faced many problems and adjusting to life in North America wasn’t easy. “They may have been novices to American ways, but they were far from being naive or submissive,” explains Robert A. Rockaway.³⁶⁵ As many immigrant communities faced similar struggles, the global anti-Semitic assault was an additional burden on Jews. Cognizant of this situation, the idea of bolstering the perception of the Jewish immigrants involved more than just accepting newcomers.

³⁶⁴ Rockaway, Robert A. *Words of the Uprooted*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998. Page 206.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. Page 207.

Over the years, there have been many publications that provided indications of a great anxiety regarding the East European Jews' adjustment on the part of many established American Jews. We must recognize that the established Jews living in the West had perceived the Jewish immigrants as an inferior group because of the conditions under which they lived in Europe. There was a perception that most of these immigrants were looked upon as ignorant, narrow-minded, ungrateful, superstitious, etc. With this in mind, anticipation of possible future events contributed to a state of fear that this population might continue to live and interact as if they were living back in their homeland. I believe this "great concern" was more powerful than previous studies have posited with regard to its impact on policies of the Jewish philanthropic organizations. The Jewish image was something that the existing Jews across North America had cultivated diligently.^x Yet because of the major shift in the Jewish population and events in Europe, anti-Semitism was spreading. It was difficult to convince Americans that anti-Semitic beliefs were erroneous even if they were based mostly on fiction. Thus productivization resonated within the thinking of certain Jewish philanthropic groups and seemed like a credible solution that could make a real difference in such a situation. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, productivization seemed to be practiced because of the activities of certain philanthropies. As Jewish organizations learned to become more vocal on matters affecting community welfare, they also remained cautious for fear of triggering anti-Semitic repercussions. It was a classic case of "catch 22" – in other words damned whatever one does or doesn't do.

In this dissertation, I have attempted to address several issues through the intense apprehension within the Jewish community concerning the influx of East European Jews just before and a short period after 1900. Prior to this time, “the philanthropic gaze was directed inward, toward the Jewish poor in the lands in which the benefactors dwelled... it widened considerably in the late 1860s... and promoted international Jewish solidarity through concerted action on behalf of one’s oppressed brethren.”³⁶⁶ As the numbers of Jews increased and problems associated with the situation intensified, Jewish organizations in Europe and North America, whether linked directly or indirectly, “preferred to keep the Jewish poor out of the public eye lest Jewish paupers stimulate anti-Semitism and endanger the social acceptance....” that some Jews enjoyed.³⁶⁷ It was a real situation that existed on several levels, subtly influencing how the organized community reacted. I consider this research as a preliminary undertaking to bring to the fore the wider implications that this situation gave rise to and influenced. The influence of the original ideas of productivization and its impact represented a mechanism for social adjustment, was evident throughout this period. Even though other “new” communities experienced similar “confrontations” as newcomers, the Jewish experience remained unique. Productivization not only enhanced, but fortified the successful integration of the Jews in North America. It is one factor that is part of a bigger picture of immigrant adjustment that made the North American Jewish community as a whole,

³⁶⁶ Penslar, Derek J. *Shylock’s Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*. University of California Press, 2001. Page 175.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. Page 177.

become what it is today – the second largest thriving Jewish population outside the State of Israel.

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